





DRUSILLA WAHL PIERCE

THE MEMOIRS OF
JACQUES CASANOVA

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF NOW FOR
THE FIRST TIME TRANSLATED INTO
ENGLISH IN TWELVE VOLUMES
VOLUME SEVEN

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MEMOIRS
OF
JACQUES CASANOVA

CHAPTER I

THE DOOR-KEEPER'S DAUGHTERS—THE HOROSCOPES—
MDLLE. ROMAN

THE idea of the sorry plight in which I had left the Marquis de Prié, his mistress, and perhaps all the company, who had undoubtedly coveted the contents of my cash-box, amused me till I reached Chambéri, where I only stopped to change horses. When I reached Grenoble, where I intended to stay a week, I did not find my lodging to my liking, and went in my carriage to the post-office, where I found several letters, amongst others, one from Madame d'Urfé, enclosing a letter of introduction to an officer named Valenglard, who, she told me, was a learned man,

and would present me at all the best houses in the town.

I called on this officer and received a cordial welcome. After reading Madame d'Urfé's letter he said he was ready to be useful to me in anything I pleased.

He was an amiable, middle-aged man, and fifteen years before had been Madame d'Urfé's friend, and in a much more intimate degree the friend of her daughter, the Princess de Toudeville. I told him that I was uncomfortable at the inn, and that the first service I would ask of him would be to procure me a comfortable lodging. He rubbed his head, and said,—

"I think I can get you rooms in a beautiful house, but it is outside the town walls. The door-keeper is an excellent cook, and for the sake of doing your cooking I am sure he will lodge you for nothing."

"I don't wish that," said I.

"Don't be afraid," said the baron, "he will make it up by means of his dishes; and besides, the house is for sale and costs him nothing. Come and see it."

I took a suite of three rooms and ordered supper for two, warning the man that I was dainty, liked good things, and did not care for the cost. I also begged M. de Valenglard to sup with me. The door-keeper said that if I was not pleased with his cooking I had only to say so, and in that case I should have

nothing to pay. I sent for my carriage, and felt that I had established myself in my new abode. On the ground floor I saw three charming girls and the door-keeper's wife, who all bowed profoundly. M. de Valenglard took me to a concert with the idea of introducing me to everybody, but I begged him not to do so, as I wished to see the ladies before deciding which of them I should like to know.

The company was a numerous one, especially where women were concerned, but the only one to attract my attention was a pretty and modest-looking brunette, whose fine figure was dressed with great simplicity. Her charming eyes, after having thrown one glance in my direction, obstinately refused to look at me again. My vanity made me conclude at once that she behaved thus only to increase my desire of knowing her, and to give me plenty of time to examine her side-face and her figure, the proportions of which were not concealed by her simple attire. Success begets assurance, and the wish is father to the thought. I cast a hungry gaze on this young lady without more ado, just as if all the women in Europe were only a seraglio kept for my pleasures. I told the baron I should like to know her.

"She is a good girl," said he, "who sees no company, and is quite poor."

"Those are three reasons which make me the more anxious to know her."

"You will really find nothing to do in that quarter."

"Very good."

"There is her aunt, I will introduce you to her as we leave the concert-room."

After doing me this service, he came to sup with me. The door-keeper and cook struck me as being very like Lebel. He made his two pretty daughters wait on me, and I saw that Valenglard was delighted at having lodged me to my satisfaction, but he grumbled when he saw fifteen dishes.

"He is making a fool of you and of me," he said.

"On the contrary, he has guessed my tastes. Don't you think everything was very good?"

"I don't deny it, but . . ."

"Don't be afraid; I love spending my money."

"I beg your pardon, I only want you to be pleased."

We had exquisite wines, and at dessert some ratafia superior to the Turkish *visnat* I had tasted seventeen years before at Yussuf Ali's. When my landlord came up at the end of supper, I told him that he ought to be Louis XV.'s head cook.

"Go on as you have begun, and do better if you can; but let me have your bill every morning."

"You are quite right; with such an arrangement one can tell how one is getting on."

"I should like you always to give me ices, and

you must let me have two more lights. But, unless I am mistaken, those are candles that I see. I am a Venetian, and accustomed to wax lights."

"That is your servant's fault, sir."

"How is that?"

"Because, after eating a good supper, he went to bed, saying he was ill. Thus I heard nothing as to how you liked things done."

"Very good, you shall learn from my own lips."

"He asked my wife to make chocolate for you to-morrow morning; he gave her the chocolate, I will make it myself."

When he had left the room M. de Valenglard said, in a manner that was at the same time pleased and surprised, that Madame d'Urfé had been apparently joking in telling him to spare me all expense.

"It's her goodness of heart. I am obliged to her all the same. She is an excellent woman."

We stayed at table till eleven o'clock, discussing innumerable pleasant topics, and animating our talk with that choice liqueur made at Grenoble, of which we drank a bottle. It is composed of the juice of cherries, brandy, sugar, and cinnamon, and cannot be surpassed, I am sure, by the nectar of Olympus.

I sent home the baron in my carriage, after thanking him for his services, and begging him to be my companion early and late while I stayed at Grenoble—a request which he granted excepting for

those days on which he was on duty. At supper I had given him my bill of exchange on Zappata, which I endorsed with the name de Seingalt, which Madame d'Urfé had given me. He discounted it for me next day. A banker brought me four hundred louis and I had thirteen hundred in my cash-box. I always had a dread of penuriousness, and I delighted myself at the thought that M. de Valenglard would write and tell Madame d'Urfé, who was always preaching economy to me, what he had seen.

I escorted my guest to the carriage, and I was agreeably surprised when I got back to find the door-keeper's two charming daughters.

Le Duc had not waited for me to tell him to find some pretext for not serving me. He knew my tastes, and that when there were pretty girls in a house, the less I saw of him the better I was pleased.

The frank eagerness of the two girls to wait on me, their utter freedom from suspicion or coquetry, made me determine that I would shew myself deserving of their trust. They took off my shoes and stockings, did my hair and put on my night-gown with perfect propriety on both sides. When I was in bed I wished them a good-night, and told them to shut the door and bring me my chocolate at eight o'clock next morning.

I could not help confessing that I was perfectly happy as I reflected over my present condition. I enjoyed perfect health, I was in the prime of life,

I had no calls on me, I was thoroughly independent, I had a rich store of experience, plenty of money, plenty of luck, and I was a favourite with women. The pains and troubles I had gone through had been followed by so many days of happiness that I felt disposed to bless my destiny. Full of these agreeable thoughts I fell asleep, and all the night my dreams were of happiness and of the pretty brunette who had played with me at the concert.

I woke with thoughts of her, and feeling sure that we should become acquainted I felt curious to know what success I should have with her. She was discreet and poor; and as I was discreet in my own way she ought not to despise my friendship.

At eight o'clock, one of the door-keeper's daughters brought me my chocolate, and told me that Le Duc had got the fever.

"You must take care of the poor fellow."

"My cousin has just taken him some broth."

"What is your name?"

"My name is Rose, and my sister is Manon."

Just then Manon came in with my shirt, on which she had put fresh lace. I thanked her, and she said with a blush that she did her father's hair very well.

"I am delighted to hear it, and I shall be very pleased if you will be kind enough to do the same offices for me till my servant recovers."

"With pleasure, sir."

"And I," said Rose, laughing, "will shave you."

"I should like to see how you do it; get the water."

I rose hastily, while Manon was preparing to do my hair. Rose returned and shaved me admirably. As soon as she had washed off the lather, I said,——

"You must give me a kiss," presenting my cheek to her. She pretended not to understand.

"I shall be vexed," said I, gravely but pleasantly, "if you refuse to kiss me."

She begged to be excused, saying with a little smile, that it was not customary to do so at Grenoble.

"Well, if you won't kiss me, you shan't shave me."

The father came in at that point, bringing his bill.

"Your daughter has just shaved me admirably," said I, "and she refuses to kiss me, because it is not the custom at Grenoble."

"You little silly," said he, "it is the custom in Paris. You kiss me fast enough after you have shaved me, why should you be less polite to this gentleman?"

She then kissed me with an air of submission to the paternal decree which made Manon laugh.

"Ah!" said the father, "your turn will come when you have finished doing the gentleman's hair."

He was a cunning fellow, who knew the best

way to prevent me cheapening him, but there was no need, as I thought his charges reasonable, and as I paid him in full he went off in great glee.

Manon did my hair as well as my dear Dubois, and kissed me when she had done without making as many difficulties as Rose. I thought I should get on well with both of them. They went downstairs when the banker was announced.

He was quite a young man, and after he had counted me out four hundred louis, he observed that I must be very comfortable.

"Certainly," said I, "the two sisters are delightful."

"Their cousin is better. They are too discreet."

"I suppose they are well off."

"The father has two thousand francs a year. They will be able to marry well-to-do tradesmen."

I was curious to see the cousin who was said to be prettier than the sisters, and as soon as the banker had gone I went downstairs to satisfy my curiosity. I met the father and asked him which was Le Duc's room, and thereon I went to see my fine fellow. I found him sitting up in a comfortable bed with a rubicund face which did not look as if he were dangerously ill.

"What is the matter with you?"

"Nothing, sir. I am having a fine time of it. Yesterday I thought I would be ill."

"What made you think that?"

"The sight of the three Graces here, who are made of better stuff than your handsome housekeeper, who would not let me kiss her. They are making me wait too long for my broth, however. I shall have to speak severely about it."

"Le Duc, you are a rascal."

"Do you want me to get well?"

"I want you to put a stop to this farce, as I don't like it."

Just then the door opened, and the cousin came in with the broth. I thought her ravishing, and I noticed that in waiting on Le Duc she had an imperious little air which well became her.

"I shall dine in bed," said my Spaniard.

"You shall be attended to," said the pretty girl, and she went out.

"She puts on big airs," said Le Duc, "but that does not impose on me. Don't you think she is very pretty?"

"I think you are very impudent. You ape your betters, and I don't approve of it. Get up. You must wait on me at table, and afterwards you will eat your dinner by yourself, and try to get yourself respected as an honest man always is, whatever his condition, so long as he does not forget himself. You must not stay any longer in this room, the door-keeper will give you another."

I went out, and on meeting the fair cousin I told her that I was jealous of the honour which she

had done my man, and that I begged her to wait on him no longer.

"Oh, I am very glad!"

The door-keeper came up, and I gave him my orders, and went back to my room to write.

Before dinner the baron came and told me that he had just come from the lady to whom he had introduced me. She was the wife of a barrister named Morin, and aunt to the young lady who had so interested me.

"I have been talking of you," said the baron, "and of the impression her niece made on you. She promised to send for her, and to keep her at the house all day."

After a dinner as good as the supper of the night before, though differing from it in its details, and appetising enough to awaken the dead, we went to see Madame Morin, who received us with the easy grace of a Parisian lady. She introduced me to seven children, of whom she was the mother. Her eldest daughter, an ordinary-looking girl, was twelve years old, but I should have taken her to be fourteen, and said so. To convince me of her age the mother brought a book in which the year, the month, the day, the hour, and even the minute of her birth were entered. I was astonished at such minute accuracy, and asked if she had had a horoscope drawn.

"No," said she, "I have never found anybody to do it."

"It is never too late," I replied, "and without doubt God has willed that this pleasure should be reserved for me."

At this moment M. Morin came in, his wife introduced me, and after the customary compliments had passed, she returned to the subject of the horoscope. The barrister sensibly observed that if judicial astrology was not wholly false, it was, nevertheless, a suspected science; that he had been so foolish as once to devote a considerable portion of his time to it, but that on recognizing the inability of man to deal with the future he had abandoned astrology, contenting himself with the veritable truths of astronomy. I saw with pleasure that I had to deal with a man of sense and education, but Valenglard, who was a believer in astrology, began an argument with him on the subject. During their discussion I quietly copied out on my tablets the date of Mdlle. Morin's birth. But M. Morin saw what I was about, and shook his head at me, with a smile. I understood what he meant, but I did not allow that to disconcert me, as I had made up my mind fully five minutes ago that I would play the astrologer on this occasion.

At last the fair niece arrived. Her aunt introduced me to her as Mdlle. Roman Coupier, her sister's daughter; and then, turning to her, she informed her how ardently I had been longing to know her since I had seen her at the concert.

She was then seventeen. Her satin skin by its dazzling whiteness displayed to greater advantage her magnificent black hair. Her features were perfectly regular, and her complexion had a slight tinge of red; her fine eyes were at once sweet and sparkling, her eyebrows were well arched, her mouth small, her teeth regular and as white as pearls, and her lips, of an exquisite rosy hue, afforded a seat to the deities of grace and modesty.

After some moments' conversation, M. Morin was obliged to go out on business, and a game of quadrille was proposed, at which I was greatly pitied for having lost a louis. I thought Mdle. Roman discreet, judicious, pleasant without being brilliant, and, still better, without any pretensions. She was high-spirited, even-tempered, and had a natural art which did not allow her to seem to understand too flattering a compliment, or a joke which passed in any way the bounds of propriety. She was neatly dressed, but had no ornaments, and nothing which shewed wealth; neither earrings, rings, nor a watch. One might have said that her beauty was her only adornment, the only ornament she wore being a small gold cross hanging from her necklace of black ribbon. Her breast was well shaped and not too large. Fashion and custom made her shew half of it as innocently as she shewed her plump white hand, or her cheeks, whereon the lily and the rose were wedded. I looked

at her features to see if I might hope at all; but I was completely puzzled, and could come to no conclusion. She gave no sign which made me hope, but on the other hand she did nothing to make me despair. She was so natural and so reserved that my sagacity was completely at fault. Nevertheless, a liberty which I took at supper gave me a gleam of hope. Her napkin fell down, and in returning it to her I pressed her thigh amorously, and could not detect the slightest displeasure on her features. Content with so much I begged everybody to come to dinner with me next day, telling Madame Morin that I should not be going out, and that I was therefore delighted to put my carriage at her service.

When I had taken Valenglard home, I went to my lodging building castles in Spain as to the conquest of Mdle. Roman.

I warned my landlord that we should be six at dinner and supper the following day, and then I went to bed. As Le Duc was undressing me he said,—

“Sir, you are punishing me, but what makes me sorry you are punishing yourself in depriving yourself of the services of those pretty girls.”

“You are a rogue.”

“I know it, but I serve you with all my heart, and I love your pleasure as well as my own.”

"You plead well for yourself; I am afraid I have spoilt you."

"Shall I do your hair to-morrow?"

"No; you may go out every day till dinner-time."

"I shall be certain to catch it."

"Then I shall send you to the hospital."

"That is a fine prospect, *por Dios*."

He was impudent, sly, profligate, and a rascally fellow; but also obedient, devoted, discreet, and faithful, and his good qualities made me overlook his defects.

Next morning, when Rose brought my chocolate, she told me with a laugh that my man had sent for a carriage, and after dressing himself in the height of fashion he had gone off with his sword at his side, to pay calls, as he said.

"We laughed at him."

"You were quite right, my dear Rose."

As I spoke, Manon came in under some pretext or other. I saw that the two sisters had an understanding never to be alone with me; I was displeased, but pretended not to notice anything. I got up, and I had scarcely put on my dressing-gown when the cousin came in with a packet under her arm.

"I am delighted to see you, and above all to look at your smiling face, for I thought you much too serious yesterday."

"That's because M. le Duc is a greater gentleman than you are; I should not have presumed to laugh in his presence; but I had my reward in seeing him start off this morning in his gilded coach."

"Did he see you laughing at him?"

"Yes, unless he is blind."

"He will be vexed."

"All the better."

"You are really very charming. What have you got in that parcel?"

"Some goods of our own manufacture. Look; they are embroidered gloves."

"They are beautiful; the embroidery is exquisitely done. How much for the lot?"

"Are you a good hand at a bargain?"

"Certainly."

"Then we must take that into account."

After some whisperings together the cousin took a pen, put down the numbers of globes, added up and said,—

"The lot will cost you two hundred and ten francs."

"There are nine louis; give me six francs change."

"But you told us you would make a bargain."

"You were wrong to believe it."

She blushed and gave me the six francs. Rose and Manon shaved me and did my hair, giving me

a kiss with the best grace imaginable; and when I offered my cheek to the cousin she kissed me on the mouth in a manner that told me she would be wholly mine on the first opportunity.

"Shall we have the pleasure of waiting on you at the table?" said Rose.

"I wish you would."

"But we should like to know who is coming to dinner first; as if it is officers from the garrison we dare not come; they make so free."

"My guests are Madame Morin, her husband, and her niece."

"Very good."

The cousin said,—

"Mdlle. Roman is the prettiest and the best girl in Grenoble; but she will find some difficulty in marrying, as she has no money."

"She may meet some rich man who will think her goodness and her beauty worth a million of money."

"There are not many men of that kind."

"No; but there are a few."

Manon and the cousin went out, and I was left alone with Rose, who stayed to dress me. I attacked her, but she defended herself so resolutely that I desisted, and promised it should not occur again. When she had finished I gave her a louis, thanked her, and sent her away.

As soon as I was alone I locked the door, and
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proceeded to concoct the horoscope I had promised to Madame Morin. I found it an easy task to fill eight pages with learned folly; and I confined myself chiefly to declaring the events which had already happened to the native. I had deftly extracted some items of information in the course of conversation, and filling up the rest according to the laws of probability and dressing up the whole in astrological diction, I was pronounced to be a seer, and no doubts were cast on my skill. I did not indeed run much risk, for everything hung from an *if*, and in the judicious employment of *ifs* lies the secret of all astrology.

I carefully re-read the document, and thought it admirable. I felt in the vein, and the use of the cabala had made me an expert in this sort of thing.

Just after noon all my guests arrived, and at one we sat down to table. I have never seen a more sumptuous or more delicate repast. I saw that the cook was an artist more in need of restraint than encouragement. Madame Morin was very polite to the three girls, whom she knew well, and Le Duc stood behind her chair all the time, looking after her wants, and dressed as richly as the king's chamberlain. When we had nearly finished dinner Mdle. Roman passed a compliment on my three fair waiting-maids, and this giving me occasion to speak of their talents I got up and brought the gloves I had purchased from them. Mdle.

Roman praised the quality of the material and the work. I took the opportunity, and begged leave of the aunt to give her and her niece a dozen pair apiece. I obtained this favour, and I then gave Madame Morin the horoscope. Her husband read it, and though an unbeliever he was forced to admire, as all the deductions were taken naturally from the position of the heavenly bodies at the instant of his daughter's birth. We spent a couple of hours in talking about astrology, and the same time in playing at quadrille, and then we took a walk in the garden, where I was politely left to enjoy the society of the fair Roman.

Our dialogue, or rather my monologue, turned solely on the profound impression she had made on me, on the passion she had inspired, on her beauty, her goodness, the purity of my intentions, and on my need of love, lest I should go down to the grave the most hapless of men.

"Sir," said she, at last, "if my destiny points to marriage I do not deny that I should be happy to find a husband like you."

I was emboldened by this frank declaration, and seizing her hand I covered it with fiery kisses, saying passionately that I hoped she would not let me languish long. She turned her head to look for her aunt. It was getting dark, and she seemed to be afraid of something happening to her. She drew me gently with her, and on rejoining the

other guests we returned to the dining-room, where I made a small bank at faro for their amusement. Madame Morin gave her daughter and niece, whose pockets were empty, some money, and Valenglard directed their play so well that when we left off to go to supper I had the pleasure of seeing that each of the three ladies had won two or three louis.

We sat at table till midnight. A cold wind from the Alps stopped my plan of proposing a short turn in the garden. Madame Morin overwhelmed me with thanks for my entertainment, and I gave each of my lady-visitors a respectful kiss.

I heard singing in the kitchen, and on going in I found Le Duc in a high state of excitement and very drunk. As soon as he saw me he tried to rise, but he lost his centre of gravity, and fell right under the kitchen table. He was carried away to bed.

I thought this accident favourable to my desire of amusing myself, and I might have succeeded if the three Graces had not all been there. Love only laughs when two are present, and thus it is that the ancient mythology tells no story of the loves of the Graces, who were always together. I had not yet found an opportunity of getting my three maids one after the other, and I dared not risk a general attack, which might have lost me the confidence of each one. Rose, I saw, was openly jealous of her cousin, as she kept a keen look-out after her movements.

I was not sorry, for jealousy leads to anger, and anger goes a long way. When I was in bed I sent them away with a modest good night.

Next morning, Rose came in by herself to ask me for a cake of chocolate, for, as she said, Le Duc was now ill in real earnest. She brought me the box, and I gave her the chocolate, and in doing so I took her hand and shewed her how well I loved her. She was offended, drew back her hand sharply, and left the room. A moment after Manon came in under the pretext of shewing me a piece of lace I had torn away in my attempts of the day before, and of asking me if she should mend it. I took her hand to kiss it, but she did not give me time, presenting her lips, burning with desire. I took her hand again, and it was just on the spot when the cousin came in. Manon held the piece of lace, and seemed to be waiting for my answer. I told her absently that I should be obliged if she would mend it when she had time, and with this she went out.

I was troubled by this succession of disasters, and thought that the cousin would not play me false from the earnest of her affection which she had given me the day before in that ardent kiss of hers. I begged her to give me my handkerchief, and gently drew her hand towards me. Her mouth fastened to mine, and her hand, which she left to my pleasure with all the gentleness of a lamb, was

already in motion when Rose came in with my chocolate. We regained our composure in a moment, but I was furious at heart. I scowled at Rose, and I had a right to do so after the manner in which she had repulsed me a quarter of an hour before. Though the chocolate was excellent, I pronounced it badly made. I chid her for her awkwardness in waiting on me, and repulsed her at every step. When I got up I would not let her shave me; I shaved myself, which seemed to humiliate her, and then Manon did my hair. Rose and the cousin then went out, as if to make common cause together, but it was easy to see that Rose was less angry with her sister than her cousin.

As Manon was finishing my toilette, M. de Valenglard came in. As soon as we were alone, the officer, who was a man of honour and of much sense, in spite of his belief in astrology and the occult sciences, said that he thought me looking rather melancholy, and that if my sadness had any connection with the fair Roman, he warned me to think no more of her, unless I had resolved to ask her hand in marriage. I replied that to put an end to all difficulties I had decided on leaving Grenoble in a few days. We dined together and we then called on Madame Morin, with whom we found her fair niece.

Madame Morin gave me a flattering welcome, and Mdlle. Roman received me so graciously that I was emboldened to kiss her and place her on my

knee. The aunt laughed, the niece blushed, and then slipping into my hand a little piece of paper made her escape. I read on the paper the year, day, hour, and minute of her birth, and guessed what she meant. She meant, I thought, that I could do nothing with her before I had drawn up her horoscope. My resolve was soon taken to profit by this circumstance, and I told her that I would tell her whether I could oblige her or not next day, if she would come to a ball I was giving. She looked at her aunt and my invitation was accepted.

Just then the servant announced "*The Russian Gentleman.*" I saw a well-made man of about my own age, slightly marked with the small-pox, and dressed as a traveller. He accosted Madame Morin with easy grace, was welcomed heartily by her, spoke well, scarcely gave me a glance, and did not say a word to the nieces. In the evening M. Morin came in, and the Russian gave him a small phial full of a white liquid, and then made as if he would go, but he was kept to supper.

At table the conversation ran on this marvellous liquid of his. M. Morin told me that he had cured a young man of a bruise from a billiard ball in five minutes, by only rubbing it with the liquid. He said modestly that it was a trifling thing of his own invention, and he talked a good deal about chemistry to Valenglard. As my attention was taken up by the fair Mdle. Roman I could not take part in their

conversation; my hope of succeeding with her on the following day absorbed all my thoughts. As I was going away with Valenglard he told me that nobody knew who the Russian was, and that he was nevertheless received everywhere.

"Has he a carriage and servants?"

"He has nothing, no servants and no money."

"Where did he come from?"

"From the skies."

"A fair abode, certainly; how long has he been here?"

"For the last fortnight. He visits, but asks for nothing."

"How does he live?"

"On credit at the inn; he is supposed to be waiting for his carriage and servants."

"He is probably a vagabond."

"He does not look like one, as you saw for yourself, and his diamonds contradict that hypothesis."

"Yes, if they are not imitation stones, for it seems to me that if they were real he would sell them."

When I got home Rose came by herself to attend on me, but she continued to sulk. I tried to rouse her up, but as I had no success I ordered her to go and tell her father that I was going to give a ball next day in the room by the garden, and that supper was to be laid for twenty.

When the door-keeper came to take my orders the following morning, I told him that I should like his girls to dance if he didn't mind. At this Rose condescended to smile, and I thought it a good omen. Just as she went out with her father, Manon came in under the pretext of asking me what lace I would wear for the day. I found her as gentle as a lamb and as loving as a dove. The affair was happily consummated, but we had a narrow escape of being caught by Rose, who came in with Le Duc and begged me to let him dance, promising that he would behave himself properly. I was glad that everybody should enjoy themselves and consented, telling him to thank Rose, who had got him this favour.

I had a note from Madame Morin, asking me if she might bring with her to the ball two ladies of her acquaintance and their daughters. I replied that I should be delighted for her to invite not only as many ladies but as many gentlemen as she pleased, as I had ordered supper for twenty people. She came to dinner with her niece and Valenglard, her daughter being busy dressing and her husband being engaged till the evening. She assured me that I should have plenty of guests.

The fair *Mdlle. Roman* wore the same dress, but her beauty unadorned was dazzling. Standing by me she asked if I had thought about her horoscope. I took her hand, made her sit on my knee, and promised that she should have it on the mor-

row. I held her thus, pressing her charming breasts with my left hand, and imprinting fiery kisses on her lips, which she only opened to beg me to calm myself. She was more astonished than afraid to see me trembling, and though she defended herself successfully she did not lose countenance for a moment, and in spite of my ardent gaze she did not turn her face away. I calmed myself with an effort, and her eyes expressed the satisfaction of one who has vanquished a generous enemy by the force of reason. By my silence I praised the virtue of this celestial being, in whose destiny I only had a part by one of those caprices of chance which philosophy seeks to explain in vain.

Madame Morin came up to me, and asked me to explain some points in her daughter's horoscope. She then told me that if I wanted to have four beauties at my ball she had only to write a couple of notes. "I shall only see one beauty," said I, looking at her niece. "God alone knows," said Valenglard, "what people will say in Grenoble!" "They will say it is your wedding ball," said Madame Morin to her niece.

"Yes, and they will doubtless talk of my magnificent dress, my lace, and my diamonds," said the niece, pleasantly.

"They will talk of your beauty, your wit, and your goodness," I replied, passionately, "goodness which will make your husband a happy man."

There was a silence, because they all thought I was alluding to myself. I was doing nothing of the sort. I should have been glad to give five hundred louis for her, but I did not see how the contract was to be drawn up, and I was not going to throw my money away.

We went to my bedroom, and while Mdlle. Roman was amusing herself with looking at the jewellery on my toilette-table, her aunt and Valenglard examined the books on the table by my bedside. I saw Madame Morin going to the window and looking closely at something she held in her hand. I remembered I had left out the portrait of the fair nun. I ran to her and begged her to give me the indecent picture I had so foolishly left about.

"I don't mind the indecency of it," she said, "but what strikes me is the exact likeness."

I understood everything, and I shuddered at the carelessness of which I had been guilty.

"Madam," I said, "that is the portrait of a Venetian lady, of whom I was very fond."

"I daresay, but it's very curious. These two M's, these cast-off robes sacrificed to love, everything makes my surprise greater."

"She is a nun and named M—— M——."

"And a Welsh niece of mine at Cambéri is also named M—— M——, and belongs to the same order. Nay, more, she has been at Aix, whence you have come, to get cured of an illness."

"And this portrait is like her?"

"As one drop of water is like another."

"If you go to Chambéri call on her and say you come from me; you will be welcome and you will be as much surprised as I am."

"I will do so, after I have been in Italy. However, I will not shew her this portrait, which would scandalize her; I will put it away carefully."

"I beg you not to shew it to anyone."

"You may rely on me."

I was in an ecstasy at having put her off so effectually.

At eight o'clock all my guests arrived, and I saw before me all the fairest ladies and the noblest gentlemen of Grenoble. The only thing which vexed me was the compliments they lavished on me, as is customary in the provinces.

I opened the ball with the lady pointed out to me by M. Valenglard, and then I danced with all the ladies in succession; but my partner in all the square dances was the fair Mdle. Roman, who shone from her simplicity—at least, in my eyes.

After a quadrille, in which I had exerted myself a good deal, I felt hot and went up to my room to put on a lighter suit, and as I was doing so, in came the fair cousin, who asked me if I required anything.

"Yes, you, dearest," I replied, going up to her and taking her in my arms. "Did anyone see you coming in here?"

"No, I came from upstairs, and my cousins are in the dancing-room."

"That is capital. You are fair as Love himself, and this is an excellent opportunity for shewing you how much I love you."

"Good heavens! What are you doing? Let me go, somebody might come in. Well, put out the light."

I put it out, shut the door, and, my head full of Mdlle. Roman, the cousin found me as ardent as I should have been with that delightful person. I confess, too, that the door-keeper's niece was well worthy of being loved on her own merits. I found her perfect, perhaps better than Mdlle. Roman, a novice, would have been. In spite of my ardour her passion was soon appeased, and she begged me to let her go, and I did so; but it was quite time. I wanted to begin over again, but she was afraid that our absence would be noticed by her two Argus-eyed cousins, so she kissed me and left the room.

I went back to the ball-room, and we danced on till the king of door-keepers came to tell us supper was ready.

A collation composed of the luxuries which the season and the country afforded covered the table; but what pleased the ladies most was the number and artistic arrangement of the wax lights.

I sat down at a small table with a few of my guests, and I received the most pressing invitations

to spend the autumn in their town. I am sure that if I had accepted I should have been treated like a prince, for the nobility of Grenoble bear the highest character for hospitality. I told them that if it had been possible I should have had the greatest pleasure in accepting their invitation, and in that case I should have been delighted to have made the acquaintance of the family of an illustrious gentleman, a friend of my father's.

"What name is it?" they asked me, altogether.

"Bouchenu de Valbonnais."

"He was my uncle. Ah! sir, you must come and stay with us. You danced with my daughter. What was your father's name?"

This story, which I invented, and uttered as I was wont, on the spur of the moment, turned me into a sort of wonder in the eyes of the worthy people.

After we had laughed, jested, drank, and eaten, we rose from the table and began to dance anew.

Seeing Madame Morin, her niece, and Valenglard going into the garden, I followed them, and as we walked in the moonlight I led the fair Mdlle. Roman through a covered alley; but all my fine speeches were in vain; I could do nothing. I held her between my arms, I covered her with burning kisses, but not one did she return to me, and her hands offered a successful resistance to my hardy attempts. By a sudden effort, however, I at last attained the porch of the temple of love, and held her in such a

way that further resistance would have been of no avail; but she stopped me short by saying in a voice which no man of feeling could have resisted,—

“Be my friend, sir, and not my enemy and the cause of my ruin.”

I knelt before her, and taking her hand begged her pardon, swearing not to renew my attempts. I then rose and asked her to kiss me as a pledge of her forgiveness. We rejoined her aunt, and returned to the ball-room, but with all my endeavours I could not regain my calm.

I sat down in a corner of the room, and I asked Rose, who passed by me, to get me a glass of lemonade. When she brought it she gently chid me for not having danced with her, her sister, or her cousin.

“It will give people but a poor opinion of our merits.”

“I am tired,” said I, “but if you will promise to be kind I will dance a minuet with you.”

“What do you want me to do?” said she.

“Go into my bedroom and wait for me there in the dark when you see your sister and your cousin busy dancing.”

“And you will only dance with me.”

“I swear.”

“Then you will find me in your room.”

I found her passionate, and I had full satisfaction. To keep my word with her I waited for the closing minuet, for having danced with Rose I felt

obliged in common decency to dance with the other two, especially as I owed them the same debt.

At day-break the ladies began to vanish, and as I put the Morins into my carriage I told them that I could not have the pleasure of seeing them again that day, but that if they would come and spend the whole of the day after with me I would have the horoscope ready.

I went to the kitchen to thank the worthy door-keeper for having made me cut such a gallant figure, and I found the three nymphs there, filling their pockets with sweetmeats. He told them, laughing, that as the master was there they might rob him with a clear conscience, and I bade them take as much as they would. I informed the door-keeper that I should not dine till six, and I then went to bed.

I awoke at noon, and feeling myself well rested I set to work at the horoscope, and I resolved to tell the fair Middle Roman that fortune awaited her at Paris, where she would become her master's mistress, but that the monarch must see her before she had attained her eighteenth year, as at that time her destiny would take a different turn. To give my prophecy authority, I told her some curious circumstances which had hitherto happened to her, and which I had learnt now and again from herself or Madame Morin without pretending to heed what they said.

With an Ephemeris and another astrological book, I made out and copied in six hours Mdle. Roman's horoscope, and I had so well arranged it that it struck Valenglard and even M. Morin with astonishment, and made the two ladies quite enthusiastic.

I hoped I should be asked to take the diamond to Paris myself, and I felt inclined to grant the request. I flattered myself that they could not do without me, and that I should get what I wanted, if not for love at any rate through gratitude; indeed, who knew what might become of the plan? The monarch would be sure to be caught directly. I had no doubts on that subject, for where is the man in love who does not think that his beloved object will win the hearts of all others? For the moment I felt quite jealous of the king, but, from my thorough knowledge of my own inconstancy, I felt sure that my jealousy would cease when my love had been rewarded, and I was aware that Louis XV. did not altogether hold the opinions of a Turk in such concerns. What gave an almost divine character to the horoscope was the prediction of a son to be born, who would make the happiness of France, and could only come from the royal blood and from a singular vessel of election.

A curious fancy increased my delight, namely, the thought of becoming a famous astrologer in an age when reason and science had so justly demolished

astrology. I enjoyed the thought of seeing myself sought out by crowned heads, which are always the more accessible to superstitious notions. I determined I would be particular to whom I gave my advice. Who has not made his castles in Spain? If Mdlle. Roman gave birth to a daughter instead of a son I should be amused, and all would not be lost, for a son might come afterwards.

My horoscope must only be known to the young lady and her family, who would no doubt keep the secret well. After I had put the finishing touches to it, read it, and read it again, I felt certain that I had made a masterpiece, and I then dined in bed with my three nymphs. I was polite and affectionate to them all, and we were all happy together, but I was the happiest. M. de Valenglard came to see me early the next day, and informed me that nobody suspected me of being in love with Mdlle. Roman, but that I was thought to be amorous of my landlord's girls.

"Well, let them think so," said I; "they are worthy of love, though not to be named in the same breath with one past compare, but who leaves me no hope."

"Let me tell Madame d'Urfé all about it."

"Certainly; I shall be delighted."

M. and Madame Morin and their niece came at noon, and we spent the hour before dinner in reading the horoscope. It would be impossible to

describe the four distinct sorts of surprise which I saw before me. The interesting Mdlle. Roman looked very grave, and, not knowing whether she had a will of her own, listened to what was said in silence. M. Morin looked at me now and again, and seeing that I kept a serious countenance did not dare to laugh. Valenglard shewed fanatic belief in astrology in every feature. Madame Morin seemed struck as by a miracle, and, far from thinking the fact prophe-sied too improbable, remarked that her niece was much more worthy of becoming her sovereign's wife or mistress than the bigoted Maintenon had been.

"She would never have done anything," said Madame Morin, "if she had not left America and come to France; and if my niece does not go to Paris nobody can say that the horoscope has prophe-sied falsely. We should therefore go to Paris, but how is it to be done? I don't see my way to it. The prediction of the birth of a son has something divine and entrancing about it. I don't wish to seem preju-diced, but my niece has certainly more qualifications for gaining the king's affection than the Maintenon had: my niece is a good girl and young, while the Maintenon was no longer as young as she had been, and had led a strange life before she became a de-votee. But we shall never accomplish this journey to Paris."

"Nay," said Valenglard, in a serious tone, which

struck me as supremely ridiculous, "she must go; her fate must be fulfilled."

The fair Mdlle. Roman seemed all amazed. I let them talk on, and we sat down to dinner.

At first silence reigned, and then the conversation ran on a thousand trifles, as is usual in good society, but by degrees, as I had thought, they returned to the horoscope.

"According to the horoscope," said the aunt, "the king is to fall in love with my niece in her eighteenth year; she is now close on it. What are we to do? Where are we to get the hundred louis necessary? And when she gets to Paris is she to go to the king and say, 'Here I am, your majesty'? And who is going to take her there? I can't."

"My aunt Roman might," said the young lady, blushing up to her eyes at the roar of laughter which none of us could restrain.

"Well," said Madame Morin, "there is Madame Varnier, of the Rue de Richelieu; she is an aunt of yours. She has a good establishment, and knows everybody."

"See," said Valenglard, "how the ways of destiny are made plain. You talk of a hundred louis; twelve will be sufficient to take you to Madame Varnier's. When you get there, leave the rest to your fate, which will surely favour you."

"If you do go to Paris," said I, "say nothing to

Madame Roman or Madame Varnier about the horoscope."

"I will say nothing to anyone about it; but, after all, it is only a happy dream. I shall never see Paris, still less Louis XV."

I arose, and going to my cash-box I took out a roll of a hundred and fifty louis, which I gave to her, saying it was a packet of sweetmeats. It felt rather heavy, and on opening it she found it to contain fifty pieces-of-eight, which she took for medals.

"They are gold," said Valenglard.

"And the goldsmith will give you a hundred and fifty louis for them," added M. Morin.

"I beg you will keep them; you can give me a bill payable at Paris when you become rich."

I knew she would refuse to accept my present, although I should have been delighted if she had kept the money. But I admired her strength of mind in restraining her tears, and that without disturbing for a moment the smile on her face.

We went out to take a turn in the garden. Valenglard and Madame Morin began on the topic of the horoscope anew, and I left them, taking Mdlle. Roman with me.

"I wish you would tell me," said she, when we were out of hearing of the others, "if this horoscope is not all a joke."

"No," I answered, "it is quite serious, but it all

depends on an *if*. *If* you do not go to Paris the prophecy will never be fulfilled."

"You must think so, certainly, or you would never have offered me those fifty medals."

"Do me the pleasure of accepting them now; nobody will know anything about it."

"No, I cannot, though I am much obliged to you. But why should you want to give me such a large sum?"

"For the pleasure of contributing to your happiness, and in the hope that you will allow me to love you."

"If you really love me, why should I oppose your love? You need not buy my consent; and to be happy I do not want to possess the King of France, if you did but know to what my desires are limited."

"Tell me."

"I would fain find a kind husband, rich enough for us not to lack the necessaries of life."

"But how if you did not love him?"

"If he was a good, kind man how could I help loving him?"

"I see that you do not know what love is."

"You are right. I do not know the love that maddens, and I thank God for it."

"Well, I think you are wise; may God preserve you from that love."

"You say, that as soon as the king sees me he will fall in love with me, and to tell you the truth

that strikes me as vastly improbable; for though it is quite possible that he may not think me plain, or he might even pronounce me pretty, yet I do not think he will become so madly in love as you say."

"You don't? Let us sit down. You have only got to fancy that the king will take the same liking to you that I have done; that is all."

"But what do you find in me that you will not find in most girls of my age? I certainly may have struck you; but that only proves that I was born to exercise this sway over you, and not at all that I am to rule the king in like manner. Why should I go and look for the king, if you love me yourself?"

"Because I cannot give you the position you deserve."

"I should have thought you had plenty of money."

"Then there's another reason: you are not in love with me."

"I love you as tenderly as if I were your wife. I might then kiss you, though duty now forbids my doing so."

"I am much obliged to you for not being angry with me for being so happy with you!"

"On the contrary, I am delighted to please you."

"Then you will allow me to call on you at an early hour to-morrow, and to take coffee at your bedside."

"Do not dream of such a thing. If I would I

could not. I sleep with my aunt, and I always rise at the same time she does. Take away your hand; you promised not to do it again. In God's name, let me alone."

Alas! I had to stop; there was no overcoming her. But what pleased me extremely was that in spite of my amorous persecution she did not lose that smiling calm which so became her. As for myself I looked as if I deserved that pardon for which I pleaded on my knees, and in her eyes I read that she was sorry that she could not grant what I required of her.

I could no longer stay beside her, my senses were too excited by her beauty. I left her and went to my room where I found the kind Manon busying herself on my cuffs, and she gave me the relief I wanted, and when we were both satisfied made her escape. I reflected that I should never obtain more than I had obtained hitherto from young Mdle. Roman—at least, unless I gave the lie to my horoscope by marrying her, and I decided that I would not take any further steps in the matter.

I returned to the garden, and going up to the aunt I begged her to walk with me. In vain I urged the worthy woman to accept a hundred louis for her niece's journey from me. I swore to her by all I held sacred that no one else should ever know of the circumstance. All my eloquence and all my prayers were in vain. She told me that if her niece's des-

tiny only depended on that journey all would be well, for she had thought over a plan which would, with her husband's consent, enable Mdlle. Roman to go to Paris. At the same time she gave me her sincerest thanks, and said that her niece was very fortunate to have pleased me so well.

"She pleased me so well," I replied, "that I have resolved to go away to-morrow to avoid making proposals to you which would bring the great fortune that awaits her to nought. If it were not for that I should have been happy to have asked her hand of you."

"Alas! her happiness would, perhaps, be built on a better foundation. Explain yourself."

"I dare not wage war with fate."

"But you are not going to-morrow?"

"Excuse me, but I shall call to take leave at two o'clock."

The news of my approaching departure saddened the supper-table. Madame Morin, who, for all I know, may be alive now, was a most kind-hearted woman. At table she announced her resolve that as I had decided on going, and as I should only leave my house to take leave of her, she would not force me to put myself out to such an extent, and ordained that our farewells should be said that evening.

"At least," I said, "I may have the honour of escorting you to your door?"

"That will protract our happiness for some minutes."

Valenglard went away on foot, and the fair Mdlle. Roman sat on my knee. I dared to be bold with her, and contrary to expectation she shewed herself so kind that I was half sorry I was going; but the die was cast.

A carriage lying overturned on the road outside an inn made my coachman stop a short while, and this accident which made the poor driver curse overwhelmed me with joy, for in these few moments I obtained all the favours that she could possibly give under the circumstances.

Happiness enjoyed alone is never complete. Mine was not until I assured myself, by looking at my sweetheart's features, that the part she had taken had not been an entirely passive one; and I escorted the ladies to their room. There, without any conceit, I was certain that I saw sadness and love upon that fair creature's face. I could see that she was neither cold nor insensible, and that the obstacles she had put in my way were only suggested by fear and virtue. I gave Madame Morin a farewell kiss, and she was kind enough to tell her niece to give me a similar mark of friendship, which she did in a way that shewed me how completely she had shared my ardour.

I left them, feeling amorous and sorry I had obliged myself to go. On entering my room I found

the three nymphs together, which vexed me as I only wanted one. I whispered my wishes to Rose as she curled my hair, but she told me it was impossible for her to slip away as they all slept in one room. I then told them that I was going away the next day, and that if they would pass the night with me I would give them a present of six louis each. They laughed at my proposal and said it couldn't possibly be done. I saw by this they had not made confidantes of one another, as girls mostly do, and I also saw that they were jealous of each other. I wished them a good night, and as soon as I was in bed the god of dreams took me under his care, and made me pass the night with the adorable Mdle. Roman.

I rang rather late in the morning, and the cousin came in and said that Rose would bring my chocolate, and that M. Charles Ivanoff wanted to speak to me. I guessed that this was the Russian, but as he had not been introduced to me I thought I might decline to see him.

"Tell him I don't know his name."

Rose went out, and came in again saying he was the gentleman who had had the honour of supping with me at Madame Morin's.

"Tell him to come in."

"Sir," said he, "I want to speak with you in private."

"I cannot order these young ladies to leave my room, sir. Be kind enough to wait for me outside

till I have put on my dressing-gown, and then I shall be ready to speak to you."

"If I am troubling you, I will call again to-morrow."

"You would not find me, as I am leaving Grenoble to-day."

"In that case I will wait."

I got up in haste and went out to him.

"Sir," said he, "I must leave this place, and I have not a penny to pay my landlord. I beg of you to come to my aid. I dare not have recourse to anyone else in the town for fear of exposing myself to the insult of a refusal."

"Perhaps I ought to feel myself flattered at the preference you have shewn me, but without wishing to insult you in any way I am afraid I shall be obliged to refuse your request."

"If you knew who I am I am sure you would not refuse me some small help."

"If you think so, tell me who you are; you may count on my silence."

"I am Charles, second son of Ivan, Duke of Courland, who is in exile in Siberia. I made my escape."

"If you go to Genoa you will find yourself beyond the reach of poverty; for no doubt the brother of your lady-mother would never abandon you."

"He died in Silesia."

"When?"

"Two years ago, I believe."

"You have been deceived, for I saw him at Stuttgart scarcely six months ago. He is the Baron de Treiden."

It did not cost me much to get wind of the adventurer, but I felt angry that he had had the impudence to try and dupe me. If it had not been for that I would willingly have given him six louis, for it would have been bad form on my part to declare war against adventurers, as I was one myself, and I ought to have pardoned his lies as nearly all adventurers are more or less impostors.

I gave a glance at his diamond buckles, which were considered real at Grenoble, and I saw directly that they were counterfeits of a kind made in Venice, which imitate the facets of the diamonds in perfection, except to people who are experienced in diamonds.

"You have diamond buckles," said I. "Why don't you sell them?"

"It's the last piece of jewellery I possess out of all my mother gave me, and I promised her never to part with them."

"I would not shew those buckles if I were you; your pocket would be a better place for them. I may tell you frankly that I believe the stones to be counterfeit, and that your lie displeases me."

"Sir, I am not a liar."

"We shall see. Prove that the stones are genu-

ine, and I will give you six louis. I shall be delighted if I am in the wrong. Farewell."

Seeing M. de Valenglard coming up to my door, he begged me not to tell him of what had passed between us; and I promised that I would tell no one.

Valenglard came to wish me a prosperous journey; he himself was obliged to go with M. Montei-nard. He begged me to correspond constantly with him; and I had been intending to prefer the same request, as I took too great an interest in the fair Mdlle. Roman not to wish to hear of her fate, and the correspondence the worthy officer desired was the best way possible for me to hear about her. As will be imagined, I promised what he asked without making any difficulty. He shed tears as he embraced me, and I promised to be his friend.

CHAPTER II

MY DEPARTURE FROM GRENOBLE—AVIGNON—THE
FOUNTAIN OF VAUCLUSE—THE FALSE ASTRODI AND
THE HUMPRACK—GAETAN COSTA—I ARRIVE AT
MARSEILLES

WHILE the three girls were helping Le Duc to pack my mails my landlord entered, gave me his bill, and finding everything correct I paid him, much to his satisfaction. I owed him a compliment, too, at which he seemed extremely gratified.

"Sir," said I, "I do not wish to leave your house without having the pleasure of dining with your charming girls, to shew them how I appreciate the care they have taken of me. Let me have, then, a delicate repast for four, and also order post horses, that I may start in the evening."

"Sir," broke in Le Duc, "I entreat you to order a saddle-horse besides; I was not made for a seat behind a chaise."

The cousin laughed openly at his vain boasting, and to avenge himself the rascal told her that he was better than she.

"Nevertheless, M. le Duc, you will have to wait on her at table."

"Yes, as she waits on you in bed."

I ran for my stick, but the rogue, knowing what was going to happen, opened the window and jumped into the courtyard. The girls gave a shriek of terror, but when we looked out we saw him jumping about and performing a thousand apish tricks.

Very glad to find that he had not broken a limb, I called out, "Come back, I forgive you." The girls, and the man himself who escaped so readily, were as delighted as I. Le Duc came in in high spirits, observing that he did not know he was such a good jumper.

"Very good, but don't be so impudent another time. Here, take this watch."

So saying, I gave him a valuable gold watch, which he received, saying,—

"I would jump again for another watch like this."

Such was my Spaniard, whom I had to dismiss two years afterwards. I have often missed him.

The hours went by with such speed when I was seated at table with the three girls, whom I vainly endeavoured to intoxicate, that I decided that I would not leave till the next day. I was tired of making mysteries and wanted to enjoy them all together, and resolved that the orgy should take place that night. I told them that if they would pass the night in

my room I would not go till the next day. This proposition was received with a storm of exclamations and with laughter, as at an impossibility, while I endeavoured to excite them to grant my request. In the midst of this the door-keeper came in, advising me not to travel by night, but to go to Avignon by a boat in which I could ship my carriage.

"You will save time and money," said he.

"I will do so," I answered, "if these girls of yours will keep me company all night, as I am determined I will not go to bed."

"O Lord!" said he with a laugh, "that's their business."

This decided them and they gave in. The door-keeper sent to order the boat, and promised to let me have a dainty supper by midnight.

The hours passed by in jests and merriment, and when we sat down to supper I made the champagne corks fly to such an extent that the girls began to get rather gay. I myself felt a little heated, and as I held each one's secret I had the hardihood to tell them that their scruples were ridiculous, as each of them had shewn no reserve to me in private.

At this they gazed at one another in a kind of blank surprise, as if indignant at what I had said. Foreseeing that feminine pride might prompt them to treat my accusation as an idle calumny, I resolved not to give them time, and drawing Manon on to my knee I embraced her with such ardour that she

gave in and abandoned herself to my passion. Her example overcame the others, and for five hours we indulged in every kind of voluptuous enjoyment. At the end of that time we were all in need of rest, but I had to go. I wanted to give them some jewels, but they said they would rather I ordered gloves to the amount of thirty louis, the money to be paid in advance, and the gloves not to be called for.

I went to sleep on board the boat, and did not awake till we got to Avignon. I was conducted to the inn of "St. Omer," and supped in my room in spite of the marvellous tales which Le Duc told me of a young beauty at the public table.

Next morning my Spaniard told me that the beauty and her husband slept in a room next to mine. At the same time he brought me a bill of the play, and I saw *Company from Paris*, with Mdle. Astrodi, who was to sing and dance. I gave a cry of wonder, and exclaimed,—

"The famous Astrodi at Avignon—how she will be astonished to see me!"

Not wanting to live in hermit fashion, I went downstairs to dine at the public table, and I found a score of people sitting down to such a choice repast that I could not conceive how it could be done for forty sous a head. The fair stranger drew all eyes, and especially mine, towards her. She was a young and perfect beauty, silent, her eyes fixed on a napkin, replying in monosyllables to those who addressed her,

and glancing at the speaker with large blue eyes, the beauty of which it would be difficult to describe. Her husband was seated at the other end of the table—a man of a kind that inspires contempt at the first glance. He was young, marked with the small-pox, a greedy eater, a loud talker, laughing and speaking at random, and altogether I took him for a servant in disguise. Feeling sure that such a fellow did not know how to refuse, I sent him a glass of champagne, which he drank off to my health forthwith. “May I have the pleasure of sending a glass to your wife?” He replied, with a roar of laughter, to ask her myself; and with a slight bow she told me that she never took anything to drink. When the dessert came in she rose, and her husband followed her to their room.

A stranger who like myself had never seen her before, asked me who she was. I said I was a new-comer and did not know, and somebody else said that her husband called himself the Chevalier Stuard, that he came from Lyons, and was going to Marseilles; he came, it appeared, to Avignon a week ago, without servants, and in a very poor carriage.

I intended staying at Avignon only as long as might be necessary to see the Fountain or Fall of Vaucluse, and so I had not got any letters of introduction, and had not the pretext of acquaintance that I might stay and enjoy her fine eyes. But an Italian who had read and enjoyed the divine Petrarch

would naturally wish to see the place made divine by the poet's love for Laura.

I went to the theatre, where I saw the vice-legatè Salviati, women of fashion, neither fair nor foul, and a wretched comic opera; but I neither saw Astrodi nor any other actor from the *Comédie Italienne* at Paris.

"Where is the famous Astrodi?" said I, to a young man sitting by me, "I have not seen her yet."

"Excuse me, she has danced and sang before your eyes."

"By Jove, it's impossible! I know her perfectly, and if she has so changed as not to be recognized she is no longer herself."

I turned to go, and two minutes after the young man I had addressed came up and begged me to come back, and he would take me to Astrodi's dressing-room, as she had recognized me. I followed him without saying a word, and saw a plain-looking girl, who threw her arms round my neck and addressed me by my name, though I could have sworn I had never seen her before, but she did not leave me time to speak. Close by I saw a man who gave himself out as the father of the famous Astrodi, who was known to all Paris, who had caused the death of the Comte d'Egmont, one of the most amiable noblemen of the Court of Louis XV. I thought this ugly female might be her sister, so I sat down and complimented her on her talents. She asked if I would

mind her changing her dress; and in a moment she was running here and there, laughing and shewing a liberality which possibly might have been absent if what she had to display had been worth seeing.

I laughed internally at her wiles, for after my experiences at Grenoble she would have found it a hard task to arouse my desires if she had been as pretty as she was ugly. Her thinness and her tawny skin could not divert my attention from other still less pleasing features about her. I admired her confidence in spite of her disadvantages. She must have credited me with a diabolic appetite, but these women often contrive to extract charms out of their depravity which their delicacy would be impotent to furnish. She begged me to sup with her, and as she persisted I was obliged to refuse her in a way I should not have allowed myself to use with any other woman. She then begged me to take four tickets for the play the next day, which was to be for her benefit. I saw it was only a matter of twelve francs, and delighted to be quit of her so cheaply I told her to give me sixteen. I thought she would have gone mad with joy when I gave her a double louis. She was not the real *Astrodi*. I went back to my inn and had a delicious supper in my own room.

While Le Due was doing my hair before I went to bed, he told me that the landlord had paid a visit to the fair stranger and her husband before supper, and had said in clear terms that he must be paid

next morning ; and if he were not, no place would be laid for them at table, and their linen would be detained.

"Who told you that?"

"I heard it from here ; their room is only separated from this by a wooden partition. If they were in it now, I am sure they could hear all we are saying."

"Where are they, then?"

"At table, where they are eating for to-morrow, but the lady is crying. There's a fine chance for you, sir."

"Be quiet ; I shan't have anything to do with it. It's a trap, for a woman of any worth would die rather than weep at a public table."

"Ah, if you saw how pretty she looks in tears ! I am only a poor devil, but I would willingly give her two louis if she would earn them."

"Go and offer her the money."

A moment after the gentleman and his wife came back to their room, and I heard the loud voice of the one and the sobs of the other, but as he was speaking Walloon I did not understand what he said.

"Go to bed," said I to Le Duc, "and next morning tell the landlord to get me another room, for a wooden partition is too thin a barrier to keep off people whom despair drives to extremities."

I went to bed myself, and the sobs and muttering did not die away till midnight.

I was shaving next morning, when Le Duc announced the Chevalier Stuard.

"Say I don't know anybody of that name."

He executed my orders, and returned saying that the chevalier on hearing my refusal to see him had stamped with rage, gone into his chamber, and come out again with his sword beside him.

"I am going to see," added Le Duc, "that your pistols are well primed for the future."

I felt inclined to laugh, but none the less I admired the foresight of my Spaniard, for a man in despair is capable of anything.

"Go," said I, "and ask the landlord to give me another room."

In due course the landlord came himself and told me that he could not oblige me until the next day.

"If you don't get me another room I shall leave your house on the spot, because I don't like hearing sobs and reproaches all night."

"Can you hear them, sir?"

"You can hear them yourself now. What do you think of it? The woman will kill herself, and you will be the cause of her death."

"I, sir? I have only asked them to pay me my just debts."

"Hush! there goes the husband. I am sure he is telling his wife in his language that you are an unfeeling monster."

"He may tell her what he likes so long as he pays me."

"You have condemned them to die of hunger. How much do they owe you?"

"Fifty francs."

"Aren't you ashamed of making such a row for a wretched sum like that?"

"Sir, I am only ashamed of an ill deed, and I do not commit such a deed in asking for my own."

"There's your money. Go and tell them that you have been paid, and that they may eat again; but don't say who gave you the money."

"That's what I call a good action," said the fellow; and he went and told them that they did not owe him anything, but that they would never know who paid the money.

"You may dine and sup," he added, "at the public table, but you must pay me day by day."

After he had delivered this speech in a high voice, so that I could hear as well as if I had been in the room, he came back to me.

"You stupid fool!" said I, pushing him away, "they will know everything." So saying I shut my door.

Le Duc stood in front of me, staring stupidly before him.

"What's the matter with you, idiot?" said I.

"That's fine. I see. I am going on the stage. You would do well to become an actor."

"You are a fool."

"Not so big a fool as you think."

"I am going for a walk; mind you don't leave my room for a moment."

I had scarcely shut the door when the chevalier accosted me and overwhelmed me with thanks.

"Sir, I don't know to what you are referring."

He thanked me again and left me, and walking by the banks of the Rhone, which geographers say is the most rapid river in Europe, I amused myself by looking at the ancient bridge. At dinner-time I went back to the inn, and as the landlord knew that I paid six francs a meal he treated me to an exquisite repast. Here, I remember, I had some exceedingly choice Hermitage. It was so delicious that I drank nothing else. I wished to make a pilgrimage to Vacluse and begged the landlord to procure me a good guide, and after I had dressed I went to the theatre.

I found the Astrodi at the door, and giving her my sixteen tickets, I sat down near the box of the vice-legate Salviati, who came in a little later, surrounded by a numerous train of ladies and gentlemen bedizened with orders and gold lace.

The so-called father of the false Astrodi came and whispered that his daughter begged me to say that she was the celebrated Astrodi I had known at Paris. I replied, also in a whisper, that I would not run the risk of being posted as a liar by bolstering

up an imposture. The ease with which a rogue invites a gentleman to share in a knavery is astonishing; he must think his confidence confers an honour.

At the end of the first act a score of lackeys in the prince's livery took round ices to the front boxes. I thought it my duty to refuse. A young gentleman, as fair as love, came up to me, and with easy politeness asked me why I had refused an ice.

"Not having the honour to know anyone here, I did not care that anyone should be able to say that he had regaled one who was unknown to him."

"But you, sir, are a man who needs no introduction."

"You do me too much honour."

"You are staying at the 'St. Omer'!"

"Yes; I am only stopping here to see Vacluse, where I think of going to-morrow if I can get a good guide."

"If you would do me the honour of accepting me, I should be delighted. My name is Dolci, I am son of the captain of the vice-legate's guard."

"I feel the honour you do me, and I accept your obliging offer. I will put off my start till your arrival."

"I will be with you at seven."

I was astonished at the easy grace of this young Adonis, who might have been a pretty girl if the tone of his voice had not announced his manhood. I laughed at the false Astrodi, whose acting was as

poor as her face, and who kept staring at me all the time. While she sang she regarded me with a smile and gave me signs of an understanding, which must have made the audience notice me, and doubtless pity my bad taste. The voice and eyes of one actress pleased me; she was young and tall, but hunchbacked to an extraordinary degree. She was tall in spite of her enormous humps, and if it had not been for this malformation she would have been six feet high. Besides her pleasing eyes and very tolerable voice I fancied that, like all hunchbacks, she was intelligent. I found her at the door with the ugly Astrodi when I was leaving the theatre. The latter was waiting to thank me, and the other was selling tickets for her benefit.

After the Astrodi had thanked me, the hunchbacked girl turned towards me, and with a smile that stretched from ear to ear and displayed at least twenty-four exquisite teeth, she said that she hoped I would honour her by being present at her benefit.

"If I don't leave before it comes off, I will," I replied.

At this the impudent Astrodi laughed, and in the hearing of several ladies waiting for their carriages told me that her friend might be sure of my presence, as she would not let me go before the benefit night. "Give him sixteen tickets," she added. I was ashamed to refuse, and gave her two louis. Then in a lower voice the Astrodi said, "After the

show we will come and sup with you, but on the condition that you ask nobody else, as we want to be alone."

In spite of a feeling of anger, I thought that such a supper-party would be amusing, and as no one in the town knew me I resolved to stay in the hope of enjoying a hearty laugh.

I was having my supper when Stuard and his wife went to their room. This night I heard no sobs nor reproaches, but early next morning I was surprised to see the chevalier who said, as if we had been old friends, that he had heard that I was going to Vacluse, and that as I had taken a carriage with four places he would be much obliged if I would allow him and his wife, who wanted to see the fountain, to go with me. I consented.

Le Due begged to be allowed to accompany me on horseback, saying that he had been a true prophet. In fact it seemed as if the couple had agreed to repay me for my expenditure by giving me new hopes. I was not displeased with the expedition, and it was all to my advantage, as I had had recourse to no stratagems to obtain it.

Dolci came, looking as handsome as an angel; my neighbours were ready, and the carriage loaded with the best provisions in food and drink that were obtainable; and we set off, Dolci seated beside the lady and I beside the chevalier.

I had thought that the lady's sadness would

give place, if not to gaiety, at least to a quiet cheerfulness, but I was mistaken; for, to all my remarks, grave or gay, she replied, either in monosyllables or in a severely laconic style. Poor Dolci, who was full of wit, was stupefied. He thought himself the cause of her melancholy, and was angry with himself for having innocently cast a shadow on the party of pleasure. I relieved him of his fears by telling him that when he offered me his pleasant society I was not aware that I was to be of service to the fair lady. I added that when at day-break I received this information, I was pleased that he would have such good company. The lady did not say a word. She kept silent and gloomy all the time, and gazed to right and left like one who does not see what is before his eyes.

Dolci felt at ease after my explanation, and did his best to arouse the lady, but without success. He talked on a variety of topics to the husband, always giving her an opportunity of joining in, but her lips remained motionless. She looked like the statue of Pandora before it had been quickened by the divine flame.

The beauty of her face was perfect; her eyes were of a brilliant blue, her complexion a delicate mixture of white and red, her arms were as rounded as a Grace's, her hands plump and well shaped, her figure was that of a nymph's, giving delightful hints of a magnificent breast; her hair was a chestnut

brown, her foot small: she had all that constitutes a beautiful woman save that gift of intellect, which makes beauty more beautiful, and gives a charm to ugliness itself. My vagrant fancy shewed me her naked form, all seemed ravishing, and yet I thought that though she might inspire a passing fancy she could not arouse a durable affection. She might minister to a man's pleasures, she could not make him happy.

I arrived at the isle resolved to trouble myself about her no more; she might, I thought, be mad, or in despair at finding herself in the power of a man whom she could not possibly love. I could not help pitying her, and yet I could not forgive her for consenting to be of a party which she knew she must spoil by her morose behaviour.

As for the self-styled Chevalier Stuard, I did not trouble my head whether he were her husband or her lover. He was young, commonplace-looking, he spoke affectedly; his manners were not good, and his conversation betrayed both ignorance and stupidity. He was a beggar, devoid of money and wits, and I could not make out why he took with him a beauty who, unless she were over-kind, could add nothing to his means of living. Perhaps he expected to live at the expense of simpletons, and had come to the conclusion, in spite of his ignorance, that the world is full of such; however, experience must have taught him that this plan cannot be relied on.

When we got to Vaucluse I let Dolei lead; he had been there a hundred times, and his merit was enhanced in my eyes by the fact that he was a lover of the lover of Laura. We left the carriage at Apt, and wended our way to the fountain which was honoured that day with a numerous throng of pilgrims. The stream pours forth from a vast cavern, the handiwork of nature, inimitable by man. It is situated at the foot of a rock with a sheer descent of more than a hundred feet. The cavern is hardly half as high, and the water pours forth from it in such abundance that it deserves the name of river at its source. It is the Sorgue which falls into the Rhone near Avignon. There is no other stream as pure and clear, for the rocks over which it flows harbour no deposits of any kind. Those who dislike it on account of its apparent blackness should remember that the extreme darkness of the cavern gives it that gloomy tinge.

Chiare fresche e dolce aque

Ove le belle membra

Pose colei che sola a me par donna.

I wished to ascend to that part of the rock where Petrarch's house stood. I gazed on the remains with tears in my eyes, like Leo Allatius at Homer's grave. Sixteen years later I wept at Arqua, where Petrarch died, and his house still remains. The likeness between the two situations was astonishing, for from

Petrarch's study at Arquà a rock can be seen similar to that which may be viewed at Vacluse; this was the residence of Madonna Laura.

"Let us go there," said I, "it is not far off."

I will not endeavour to delineate my feelings as I contemplated the ruins of the house where dwelt the lady whom the amorous Petrarch immortalised in his verse—verse made to move a heart of stone:

"Morte bella pareo nel suo bel viso."

I threw myself with arms outstretched upon the ground as if I would embrace the very stones. I kissed them, I watered them with my tears, I strove to breathe the holy breath they once contained. I begged Madame Stuard's pardon for having left her arm to do homage to the spirit of a woman who had quickened the profoundest soul that ever lived.

I say soul advisedly, for after all the body and the senses had nothing to do with the connection.

"Four hundred years have past and gone," said I to the statue of a woman who gazed at me in astonishment, "since Laura de Sade walked here; perhaps she was not as handsome as you, but she was lively, kindly, polite, and good of heart. May this air which she breathed and which you breathe now kindle in you the spark of fire divine; that fire that coursed through her veins, and made her heart beat and her bosom swell. Then you would win the wor-

ship of all worthy men, and from none would you receive the least offence. Gladness, madam, is the lot of the happy, and sadness the portion of souls condemned to everlasting pains. Be cheerful, then, and you will do something to deserve your beauty."

The worthy Dolci was kindled by my enthusiasm. He threw himself upon me, and kissed me again and again; the fool Stuard laughed; and his wife, who possibly thought me mad, did not evince the slightest emotion. She took my arm, and we walked slowly towards the house of Messer Francesco d'Arezzo, where I spent a quarter of an hour in cutting my name. After that we had our dinner.

Dolci lavished more attention on the extraordinary woman than I did. Stuard did nothing but eat and drink, and despised the Sorgue water, which, said he, would spoil the Hermitage; possibly Petrarch may have been of the same opinion. We drank deeply without impairing our reason, but the lady was very temperate. When we reached Avignon we bade her farewell, declining the invitation of her foolish husband to come and rest in his rooms.

I took Dolci's arm and we walked beside the Rhone as the sun went down. Among other keen and witty observations the young man said,——

"That woman is an old hand, infatuated with a sense of her own merit. I would bet that she has only left her own country because her charms, from being too freely displayed, have ceased to please

there. She must be sure of making her fortune out of anybody she comes across. I suspect that the fellow who passes for her husband is a rascal, and that her pretended melancholy is put on to drive a persistent lover to distraction. She has not yet succeeded in finding a dupe, but as she will no doubt try to catch a rich man, it is not improbable that she is hovering over you."

When a young man of Dolci's age reasons like that, he is bound to become a great master. I kissed him as I bade him good-night, thanked him for his kindness, and we agreed that we would see more of one another.

As I came back to my inn I was accosted by a fine-looking man of middle age, who greeted me by name and asked with great politeness if I had found Vacluse as fine as I had expected. I was delighted to recognize the Marquis of Grimaldi, a Genoese, a clever and good-natured man, with plenty of money, who always lived at Venice because he was more at liberty to enjoy himself there than in his native country; which shews that there is no lack of freedom at Venice.

After I had answered his question I followed him into his room, where having exhausted the subject of the fountain he asked me what I thought of my fair companion.

"I did not find her satisfactory in all respects," I answered; and noticing the reserve with which

I spoke, he tried to remove it by the following confession:

"There are some very pretty women in Genoa, but not one to compare with her whom you took to Vauchuse to-day. I sat opposite to her at table yesterday evening, and I was struck with her perfect beauty. I offered her my arm up the stair; I told her that I was sorry to see her so sad, and if I could do anything for her she had only to speak. You know I was aware she had no money. Her husband, real or pretended, thanked me for my offer, and after I had wished them a good night I left them.

"An hour ago you left her and her husband at the door of their apartment, and soon afterwards I took the liberty of calling. She welcomed me with a pretty bow, and her husband went out directly, begging me to keep her company till his return. The fair one made no difficulty in sitting next to me on a couch, and this struck me as a good omen, but when I took her hand she gently drew it away. I then told her, in as few words as I could, that her beauty had made me in love with her, and that if she wanted a hundred louis they were at her service, if she would drop her melancholy, and behave in a manner suitable to the feelings with which she had inspired me. She only replied by a motion of the head, which shewed gratitude, but also an absolute refusal of my offer. 'I am going to-morrow,' said I. No answer. I took her hand again, and she drew it

back with an air of disdain which wounded me. I begged her to excuse me, and I left the room without more ado.

"That's an account of what happened an hour ago. I am not amorous of her, it was only a whim; but knowing, as I do, that she has no money, her manner astonished me. I fancied that you might have placed her in a position to despise my offer, and this would explain her conduct, in a measure; otherwise I can't understand it at all. May I ask you to tell me whether you are more fortunate than I?"

I was enchanted with the frankness of this noble gentleman, and did not hesitate to tell him all, and we laughed together at our bad fortune: I had to promise to call on him at Genoa, and tell him whatever happened between us during the two days I purposed to remain at Avignon. He asked me to sup with him and admire the fair recalcitrant.

"She has had an excellent dinner," said I, "and in all probability she will not have any supper."

"I bet she will," said the marquis; and he was right, which made me see clearly that the woman was playing a part. A certain Comte de Bussi, who had just come, was placed next to her at table. He was a good-looking young man with a fatuous sense of his own superiority, and he afforded us an amusing scene.

He was good-natured, a wit, and inclined to

broad jokes, and his manner towards women bordered on the impudent. He had to leave at midnight and began to make love to his fair neighbour forthwith, and teased her in a thousand ways; but she remained as dumb as a statue, while he did all the talking and laughing, not regarding it within the bounds of possibility that she might be laughing at him.

I looked at M. Grimaldi, who found it as difficult to keep his countenance as I did. The young *roué* was hurt at her silence, and continued pestering her, giving her all the best pieces on his plate after tasting them first. The lady refused to take them, and he tried to put them into her mouth, while she repulsed him in a rage. He saw that no one seemed inclined to take her part, and determined to continue the assault, and taking her hand he kissed it again and again. She tried to draw it away, and as she rose he put his arm round her waist and made her sit down on his knee; but at this point the husband took her arm and led her out of the room. The attacking party looked rather taken aback for a moment as he followed her with his eyes, but sat down again and began to eat and laugh afresh, while everybody else kept a profound silence. He then turned to the footman behind his chair and asked him if his sword was upstairs. The footman said no, and then the fatuous young man turned to an abbé who sat near me, and enquired who had taken away his mistress.

"It was her husband," said the abbé.

"Her husband! Oh, that's another thing; husbands don't fight—a man of honour always apologises to them."

With that he got up, went upstairs, and came down again directly, saying,—

"The husband's a fool. He shut the door in my face, and told me to satisfy my desires somewhere else. It isn't worth the trouble of stopping, but I wish I had made an end of it."

He then called for champagne, offered it vainly to everybody, bade the company a polite farewell and went upon his way.

As M. Grimaldi escorted me to my room he asked me what I had thought of the scene we had just witnessed. I told him I would not have stirred a finger, even if he had turned up her clothes.

"No more would I," said he, "but if she had accepted my hundred louis it would have been different. I am curious to know the further history of this siren, and I rely upon you to tell me all about it as you go through Genoa."

He went away at day-break next morning.

When I got up I received a note from the false Astrodi, asking me if I expected her and her great chum to supper. I had scarcely replied in the affirmative, when the sham Duke of Courland I had left at Grenoble appeared on the scene. He confessed in a humble voice that he was the son of a clock-

maker at Narva, that his buckles were valueless, and that he had come to beg an alms of me. I gave him four louis, and he asked me to keep his secret. I replied that if anyone asked me about him I should say what was absolutely true, that I knew nothing about him.

"Thank you; I am now going to Marseilles."

"I hope you will have a prosperous journey."

Later on my readers will hear how I found him at Genoa. It is a good thing to know something about people of his kind, of whom there are far too many in the world.

I called up the landlord and told him I wanted a delicate supper for three in my own room.

He told me that I should have it, and then said, "I have just had a row with the Chevalier Stuard."

"What about?"

"Because he has nothing to pay me with, and I am going to turn them out immediately, although the lady is in bed in convulsions which are suffocating her."

"Take out your bill in her charms."

"Ah, I don't care for that sort of thing! I am getting on in life, and I don't want any more scenes to bring discredit on my house."

"Go and tell her that from henceforth she and her husband will dine and sup in their own room and that I will pay for them as long as I remain here."

"You are very generous, sir, but you know that meals in a private room are charged double."

"I know they are."

"Very good."

I shuddered at the idea of the woman being turned out of doors without any resources but her body, by which she refused to profit. On the other hand I could not condemn the inn-keeper who, like his fellows, was not troubled with much gallantry. I had yielded to an impulse of pity without any hopes of advantage for myself. Such were my thoughts when Stuard came to thank me, begging me to come and see his wife and try and persuade her to behave in a different manner.

"She will give me no answers, and you know that that sort of thing is rather tedious."

"Come, she knows what you have done for her; she will talk to you, for her feelings . . ."

"What business have you to talk about feelings after what happened yesterday evening?"

"It was well for that gentleman that he went away at midnight, otherwise I should have killed him this morning."

"My dear sir, allow me to tell you that all that is pure braggadocio. Yesterday, not to-day, was the time to kill him, or to throw your plate at his head, at all events. We will now go and see your wife."

I found her in bed, her face to the wall, the coverlet right up to her chin, and her body convulsed

with sobs. I tried to bring her to reason, but as usual got no reply. Stuard wanted to leave me, but I told him that if he went out I would go too, as I could do nothing to console her, as he might know after her refusing the Marquis of Grimaldi's hundred louis for a smile and her hand to kiss.

"A hundred louis!" cried the fellow with a sturdy oath; "what folly! We might have been at home at Liège by now. A princess allows one to kiss her hand for nothing, and she . . . A hundred louis! Oh, damnable!"

His exclamations, very natural under the circumstances, made me feel inclined to laugh. The poor devil swore by all his gods, and I was about to leave the room, when all at once the wretched woman was seized with true or false convulsions. With one hand she seized a water-bottle and sent it flying into the middle of the room, and with the other she tore the clothes away from her breast. Stuard tried to hold her, but her disorder increased in violence, and the coverlet was disarranged to such a degree that I could see the most exquisite naked charms imaginable. At last she grew calm, and her eyes closed as if exhausted; she remained in the most voluptuous position that desire itself could have invented. I began to get very excited. How was I to look on such beauties without desiring to possess them? At this point her wretched husband left the room, saying he was gone to fetch some water. I

saw the snare, and my self-respect prevented my being caught in it. I had an idea that the whole scene had been arranged with the intent that I should deliver myself up to brutal pleasure, while the proud and foolish woman would be free to disavow all participation in the fact. I constrained myself, and gently veiled what I would fain have revealed in all its naked beauty. I condemned to darkness these charms which this monster of a woman only wished me to enjoy that I might be debased.

Stuard was long enough gone. When he came back with the water-bottle full, he was no doubt surprised to find me perfectly calm, and in no disorder of any kind, and a few minutes afterwards I went out to cool myself by the banks of the Rhone.

I walked along rapidly, feeling enraged with myself, for I felt that the woman had bewitched me. In vain I tried to bring myself to reason; the more I walked the more excited I became, and I determined that after what I had seen the only cure for my disordered fancy was enjoyment, brutal or not. I saw that I should have to win her, not by an appeal to sentiment but by hard cash, without caring what sacrifices I made. I regretted my conduct, which then struck me in the light of false delicacy, for if I had satisfied my desires and she chose to turn prude, I might have laughed her to scorn, and my position would have been unassailable. At last I determined on telling the husband that I would give

him twenty-five louis if he could obtain me an interview in which I could satisfy my desires.

Full of this idea I went back to the inn, and had my dinner in my own room without troubling to enquire after her. Le Duc told me that she was dining in her room too, and that the landlord had told the company that she would not take her meals in public any more. This was information I possessed already.

After dinner I called on the good-natured Dolci, who introduced me to his father, an excellent man, but not rich enough to satisfy his son's desire of travelling. The young man was possessed of considerable dexterity, and performed a number of very clever conjuring tricks. He had an amiable nature, and seeing that I was curious to know about his love affairs he told me numerous little stories which shewed me that he was at that happy age when one's inexperience is one's sole misfortune.

There was a rich lady for whom he did not care, as she wanted him to give her that which he would be ashamed to give save for love, and there was a girl who required him to treat her with respect. I thought I could give him a piece of good advice, so I told him to grant his favours to the rich woman, and to fail in respect now and again to the girl, who would be sure to scold and then forgive. He was no profligate, and seemed rather inclined to become a Protestant. He amused himself innocently with his

friends of his own age, in a garden near Avignon, and a sister of the gardener's wife was kind to him when they were alone.

In the evening I went back to the inn, and I had not long to wait for the Astrodi and the Lepi (so the hunchbacked girl was named); but when I saw these two caricatures of women I felt stupefied. I had expected them, of course, but the reality confounded me. The Astrodi tried to counterbalance her ugliness by an outrageous freedom of manners; while the Lepi, who though a hunchback was very talented and an excellent actress, was sure of exciting desire by the rare beauty of her eyes and teeth, which latter challenged admiration from her enormous mouth by their regularity and whiteness. The Astrodi rushed up to me and gave me an Italian embrace, to which, willy nilly, I was obliged to submit. The quieter Lepi offered me her cheek, which I pretended to kiss. I saw that the Astrodi was in a fair way to become intolerable, so I begged her to moderate her transports, because as a novice at these parties I wanted to get accustomed to them by degrees. She promised that she would be very good.

While we were waiting for supper I asked her, for the sake of something to say, whether she had found a lover at Avignon.

"Only the vice-legatè's auditor," she replied; "and though he makes me his pathic he is good-natured and generous. I have accustomed myself

to his taste easily enough, though I should have thought such a thing impossible a year ago, as I fancied the exercise a harmful one, but I was wrong."

"So the auditor makes a boy of you?"

"Yes. My sister would have adored him, as that sort of love is her passion."

"But your sister has such fine haunches."

"So have I! Look here, feel me."

"You are right; but wait a bit, it is too soon for that kind of thing yet."

"We will be wanton after supper."

"I think you are wanton now," said the Lepi.

"Why?"

"Why? Ought you to shew your person like that?"

"My dear girl, you will be shewing yourself soon. When one is in good company, one is in the golden age."

"I wonder at your telling everyone what sort of a connection you have with the auditor," said I.

"Nonsense! I don't tell everyone, but everyone tells me and congratulates me too. They know the worthy man never cared for women, and it would be absurd to deny what everybody guesses. I used to be astonished at my sister, but the best plan in this world is to be astonished at nothing. But don't you like that?"

"No, I only like this."

As I spoke I laid hands on the Lepi, on the spot

where one usually finds what I called "this;" but the Astrodi, seeing that I found nothing, burst into a roar of laughter, and taking my hand put it just under her front hump, where at last I found what I wanted. The reader will guess my surprise. The poor creature, too ashamed to be prudish, laughed too. My spirits also began to rise, as I thought of the pleasure I should get out of this new discovery after supper.

"Have you never had a lover?" said I to the Lepi.

"No," said the Astrodi, "she is still a maid."

"No, I am not," replied the Lepi, in some confusion, "I had a lover at Bordeaux, and another at Montpellier."

"Yes, I know, but you are still as you were born."

"I can't deny it."

"What's that? Two lovers and still a maid! I don't understand; please tell me about it, for I have never heard of such a thing."

"Before I satisfied my first lover which happened when I was only twelve, I was just the same as I am now."

"It's wonderful. And what did he say when he saw it?"

"I swore that he was my first, and he believed me, putting it down to the peculiar shape of my body."

"He was a man of spirit; but didn't he hurt you?"

"Not a bit; but then he was very gentle."

"You must have a try after supper," said the Astrodi to me, "that would be fine fun."

"No, no," said the Lepi, "the gentleman would be too big for me."

"Nonsense! You don't want to take in all of him. I will shew you how it is."

With these words the impudent hussy proceeded to exhibit me, and I let her do what she liked.

"That's just what I should have thought," cried the Lepi; "it could never be done."

"Well, he is rather big," answered the Astrodi; "but there's a cure for everything, and he will be content with half-measures."

"It's not the length, my dear, but the thickness which frightens me; I am afraid the door is too narrow."

"All the better for you, for you can sell your maidenhead after having had two lovers."

This conversation, not devoid of wit, and still more the simplicity of the hunchback, had made me resolve to verify things for myself.

Supper came up, and I had the pleasure of seeing the two nymphs eat like starving savages, and drink still better. When the Hermitage had done its work the Astrodi proposed that we should cast off the clothes which disfigure nature.

"Certainly," said I; "and I will turn away while you are getting ready."

I went behind the curtains, took off my clothes, and went to bed with my back to them. At last the Astrodi told me that they were ready, and when I looked the Lepi took up all my attention. In spite of her double deformity she was a handsome woman. My glances frightened her, for she was doubtless taking part in an orgy for the first time. I gave her courage, however, by dint of praising those charms which the white and beautiful hands could not hide, and at last I persuaded her to come and lie beside me. Her hump prevented her lying on her back, but the ingenious Astrodi doubled up the pillows and succeeded in placing her in a position similar to that of a ship about to be launched. It was also by the tender care of the Astrodi that the introduction of the knife was managed, to the great delight of priest and victim. After the operation was over she got up and kissed me, which she could not do before, for her mouth reached to the middle of my chest, while my feet were scarcely down to her knees. I would have given ten louis to have been able to see the curious sight we must have presented at work.

"Now comes my turn," said the Astrodi; "but I don't want you to infringe on the rights of my auditor, so come and look round and see where the path lies. Take that."

"What am I to do with this slice of lemon?"

"I want you to try whether the place is free from infection, or whether it would be dangerous for you to pay it a visit."

"Is that a sure method?"

"Infallible; if everything were not right I could not bear the smart."

"There you are. How's that?"

"All right; but don't deceive me, I want no half measures. My reputation would be made if I became with child."

I ask my reader's leave to draw a veil over some incidents of this truly scandalous orgy, in which the ugly woman taught me some things I did not know before. At last, more tired than exhausted, I told them to begone, but the Astrodi insisted on finishing up with a bowl of punch. I agreed, but not wishing to have anything more to do with either of them I dressed myself again. However, the champagne punch excited them to such an extent that at last they made me share their transports. The Astrodi placed her friend in such a singular position that the humps were no longer visible, and imagining that I had before me the high priestess of Jove, I paid her a long sacrifice, in which death and resurrection followed one another in succession. But I felt disgusted with myself, and drew away from their lascivious frenzies, and gave them ten louis to get rid of them. The Astrodi fell on her knees, blessed me, thanked me, called me her god; and the

Lepi wept and laughed for joy at the same time; and thus for a quarter of an hour I was treated to a scene of an extraordinary kind.

I had them taken home in my carriage, and slept till ten o'clock next morning. Just as I was going out for a walk Stuard came to my room and told me, with an air of despair, that if I did not give him the means of going away before I left he would throw himself in the Rhone.

"That's rather tragic," said I, "but I can find a cure. I will disburse twenty-five louis, but it is your wife who must receive them; and the only condition is that she must receive me alone for an hour, and be entirely kind."

"Sir, we need just that sum; my wife is disposed to receive you; go and talk to her. I shall not be in till noon."

I put twenty-five louis in a pretty little purse, and left my room thinking that the victory was won. I entered her room and approached her bed respectfully. When she heard me she sat up in bed without taking the trouble to cover her breast, and before I could wish her good-day she spoke to me as follows:

"I am ready, sir, to pay with my body for the wretched twenty-five louis of which my husband is in need. You can do what you like with me; but remember that in taking advantage of my position to assuage your brutal lust you are the viler of the two, for I only sell myself so cheaply because neces-

sity compels me to do so. Your baseness is more shameful than mine. Come on; here I am."

With this flattering address she threw off the coverlet with a vigorous gesture, and displayed all her beauties, which I might have gazed on with such different feelings from those which now filled my breast. For a moment I was silent with indignation. All my passion had evaporated; in those voluptuous rounded limbs I saw now only the covering of a wild beast's soul. I put back the coverlet with the greatest calmness, and addressed her in a tone of cold contempt:

"No, madam, I shall not leave this room degraded because you have told me so, but I shall leave it after imparting to you a few degrading truths, of which you cannot be ignorant if you are a woman of any decency whatever. Here are twenty-five louis, a wretched sum to give a virtuous woman in payment of her favours, but much more than you deserve. I am not brutal, and to convince you of the fact I am going to leave you in the undisturbed possession of your charms, which I despise as heartily as I should have admired them if your behaviour had been different. I only give you the money from a feeling of compassion which I cannot overcome, and which is the only feeling I now have for you. Nevertheless, let me tell you that whether a woman sells herself for twenty-five louis or twenty-five million louis she is as much a prostitute in the one case as in the other,

if she does not give her love with herself, or at all events the semblance of love. Farewell."

I went back to my room, and in course of time Stuard came to thank me.

"Sir," said I, "let me alone; I wish to hear no more about your wife."

They went away the next day for Lyons, and my readers will hear of them again at Liège.

In the afternoon Dolci took me to his garden that I might see the gardener's sister. She was pretty, but not so pretty as he was. He soon got her into a good humour, and after some trifling objections she consented to be loved by him in my presence. I saw that this Adonis had been richly dowered by nature, and I told him that with such a physical conformation he had no need of emptying his father's purse to travel, and before long he took my advice. This fair Ganymede might easily have turned me into Jove, as he struggled amorously with the gardener's sister.

As I was going home I saw a young man coming out of a boat; he was from twenty to twenty-five years old, and looked very sad. Seeing me looking at him, he accosted me, and humbly asked for alms, shewing me a document authorising him to beg, and a passport stating he had left Madrid six weeks before. He came from Parma, and was named Costa. When I saw Parma my national prejudice spoke in

his favour, and I asked him what misfortune had reduced him to beggary.

"Only lack of money to return to my native country," said he.

"What were you doing at Madrid, and why did you leave?"

"I was there four years as valet to Dr. Pistoria, physician to the King of Spain, but on my health failing I left him. Here is a certificate which will shew you that I gave satisfaction."

"What can you do?"

"I write a good hand, I can assist a gentleman as his secretary, and I intend being a scribe when I get home. Here are some verses I copied yesterday."

"You write well; but can you write correctly without a book?"

"I can write from dictation in French, Latin, and Spanish."

"Correctly?"

"Yes, sir, if the dictation is done properly, for it is the business of the one who dictates to see that everything is correct."

I saw that Master Gaetan Costa was an ignorant, but in spite of that I took him to my room and told Le Due to address him in Spanish. He answered well enough, but on my dictating to him in Italian and French I found he had not the remotest ideas on orthography. "But you can't write,"

said I to him. However, I saw he was mortified at this, and I consoled him by saying that I would take him to his own country at my expense. He kissed my hand, and assured me that I should find a faithful servant in him.

This young fellow took my fancy by his originality; he had probably assumed it to distinguish himself from the blockheads amongst whom he had hitherto lived, and now used it in perfect good faith with everybody. He thought that the art of a scribe solely consisted in possessing a good hand, and that the fairest writer would be the best scribe. He said as much while he was examining a paper I had written, and as my writing was not as legible as his he tacitly told me I was his inferior, and that I should therefore treat him with some degree of respect. I laughed at this fad, and, not thinking him incorrigible I took him into my service. If it had not been for that odd notion of his I should probably have merely given him a louis, and no more. He said that spelling was of no consequence, as those who knew how to spell could easily guess the words, while those who did not know were unable to pick out the mistakes. I laughed, but as I said nothing he thought the laugh signified approval. In the dictation I gave him the Council of Trent happened to occur. According to his system he wrote Trent by a three and a nought. I burst out laughing; but he was not in the least put out, only remarking that

the pronunciation being the same it was of no consequence how the word was spelt. In point of fact this lad was a fool solely through his intelligence, matched with ignorance and unbounded self-confidence. I was pleased with his originality and kept him, and was thus the greater fool of the two, as the reader will see.

I left Avignon next day, and went straight to Marseilles, not troubling to stop at Aix. I halted at the "Treize Cantons," wishing to stay for a week at least in this ancient colony of the Phocæans, and to do as I liked there. With this idea I took no letters of introduction; I had plenty of money, and needed nobody's help. I told my landlord to give me a choice fish dinner in my own room, as I was aware that the fish in those parts is better than anywhere else.

I went out the next morning with a guide, to take me back to the inn when I was tired of walking. Not heeding where I went, I reached a fine quay; I thought I was at Venice again, and I felt my bosom swell, so deeply is the love of fatherland graven on the heart of every good man. I saw a number of stalls where Spanish and Levantine wines were kept, and a number of people drinking in them. A crowd of business men went hither and thither, running up against each other, crossing each other's paths, each occupied with his own business, and not caring whose way he got into. Hucksters, well

dressed and ill dressed, women, pretty and plain, women who stared boldly at everyone, modest maidens with downcast eyes, such was the picture I saw.

The mixture of nationalities, the grave Turk and the glittering Andalusian, the French dandy, the gross Negro, the crafty Greek, the dull Hollander; everything reminded me of Venice, and I enjoyed the scene.

I stopped a moment at a street corner to read a play-bill, and then I went back to the inn and refreshed my weary body with a delicious dinner, washed down with choice Syracusan wine. After dinner I dressed and took a place in the amphitheatre of the theatre.

CHAPTER III

ROSALIE—TOULON—NICE—I ARRIVE AT GENOA— M.
GRIMALDI—VÉRONIQUE AND HER SISTER

I NOTICED that the four principal boxes on both sides of the proscenium were adorned with pretty women, but not a single gentleman. In the interval between the first and second acts I saw gentlemen of all classes paying their devoirs to these ladies. Suddenly I heard a Knight of Malta say to a girl, who was the sole occupant of a box next to me,—

“I will breakfast with you to-morrow.”

This was enough for me. I looked at her more closely and finding her to be a dainty morsel I said, as soon as the knight had gone,—

“Will you give me my supper?”

“With pleasure; but I have been taken in so often that I shan’t expect you without an earnest.”

“How can I give you an earnest? I don’t understand.”

“You must be a new-comer here.”

“Just arrived.”

She laughed, called the knight, and said,——

“Be pleased to explain to this gentleman, who has just asked me for supper, the meaning of the word ‘earnest.’”

The good-natured knight explained, with a smile, that the lady, fearing lest my memory should prove defective, wanted me to pay for my supper in advance. I thanked him, and asked her if a louis would be enough; and on her replying in the affirmative, I gave her the louis and asked for her address. The knight told me politely that he would take me there himself after the theatre, adding,——

“She’s the wantonest wench in all Marseilles.”

He then asked me if I knew the town, and when I told him that I had only come that day he said he was glad to be the first to make my acquaintance. We went to the middle of the amphitheatre and he pointed out a score of girls to right and left, all of them ready to treat the first comer to supper. They are all on the free list, and the manager finds they serve his ends as respectable women will not sit in their boxes, and they draw people to the theatre. I noticed five or six of a better type than the one I had engaged, but I resolved to stick to her for the evening, and to make the acquaintance of the others another time.

“Is your favourite amongst them?” I said to the knight.

“No, I keep a ballet-girl, and I will introduce

you to her, as I am glad to say that I am free from all jealousy."

When the play came to an end he took me to my nymph's lodging, and we parted with the understanding that we were to see more of one another.

I found the lady in undress—a circumstance which went against her, for what I saw did not please me. She gave me a capital supper, and enlivened me by some witty and wanton sallies which made me regard her in a more favourable light. When we had supper she got into bed, and asked me to follow her example; but I told her that I never slept out. She then offered me the English article which brings peace to the soul, but I did not accept the one she offered as I thought it looked of a common make.

"I have finer ones, but they are three francs each, and the maker only sells them by the dozen," she said.

"I will take a dozen if they are really good," I replied.

She rang the bell, and a young, charming, and modest-looking girl came in. I was struck with her.

"You have got a nice maid," I remarked, when the girl had gone for the protective sheaths.

"She is only fifteen," she said, "and won't do anything, as she is new to it."

"Will you allow me to see for myself?"

"You may ask her if you like, but I don't think she will consent."

The girl came back with the packet, and putting myself in a proper position I told her to try one on. She proceeded to do so with a sulky air and with a kind of repugnance which made me feel interested in her. Number one would not go on, so she had to try on a second, and the result was that I besprinkled her plentifully. The mistress laughed, but she was indignant, threw the whole packet in my face, and ran away in a rage. I wanted nothing more after this, so I put the packet in my pocket, gave the woman two louis, and left the room. The girl I had treated so cavalierly came to light me downstairs, and thinking I owed her an apology I gave her a louis and begged her pardon. The poor girl was astonished, kissed my hand, and begged me to say nothing to her mistress.

"I will not, my dear, but tell me truly whether you are still a *virgo intacta*."

"Certainly, sir."

"Wonderful! but tell me why you wouldn't let me see for myself?"

"Because it revolted me."

"Nevertheless you will have to do so, for otherwise, in spite of your prettiness, people will not know what to make of you. Would you like to let me try?"

"Yes, but not in this horrible house."

"Where, then?"

"Go to my mother's to-morrow, I will be there. Your guide knows where she lives."

When I got outside, I asked the man if he knew her. He replied in the affirmative, and said he believed her to be an honest girl.

"You will take me to-morrow to see her mother," I said.

Next morning he took me to the end of the town, to a poor house, where I found a poor woman and poor children living on the ground floor, and eating hard black bread.

"What do you want?" said she.

"Is your daughter here?"

"No, and what if she were? I am not her bawd."

"No, of course not, my good woman."

Just then the girl came in, and the enraged mother flung an old pot which came handy, at her head. Luckily it missed, but she would not have escaped her mother's talons if I had not flung myself between them. However, the old woman set up a dismal shriek, the children imitated her, and the poor girl began to cry. This hubbub made my man come in.

"You hussy!" screamed the mother, "you are bringing disgrace on me; get out of my house. You are no longer my daughter!"

I was in a difficult position. The man begged her not to make such a noise, as it would draw all

the neighbours about the house; but the enraged woman answered only by abuse. I drew six francs from my pocket and gave them to her, but she flung them in my face. At last I went out with the daughter, whose hair she attempted to pull out by the roots, which project was defeated by the aid of my man. As soon as we got outside, the mob which the uproar had attracted hooted me and followed me, and no doubt I should have been torn to pieces if I had not escaped into a church, which I left by another door a quarter of an hour later. My fright saved me, for I knew the ferocity of the Provençals, and I took care not to reply a word to the storm of abuse which poured on me. I believe that I was never in greater danger than on that day.

Before I got back to my inn I was rejoined by the servant and the girl.

"How could you lead me into such a dangerous position?" said I. "You must have known your mother was savage."

"I hoped she would behave respectfully to you."

"Be calm; don't weep any more. Tell me how I can serve you."

"Rather than return to that horrible house I was in yesterday I would throw myself into the sea."

"Do you know of any respectable house where I can keep her?" said I to the man.

He told me he did know a respectable individual who let furnished apartments.

"Take me to it, then."

The man was of an advanced age, and he had rooms to let on all the floors.

"I only want a little nook," said the girl; and the old man took us to the highest story, and opened the door of a garret, saying,—

"This closet is six francs a month, a month's rent to be paid in advance, and I may tell you that my door is always shut at ten o'clock, and that nobody can come and pass the night with you."

The room held a bed with coarse sheets, two chairs, a little table, and a chest of drawers.

"How much will you board this young woman for?" said I.

He asked twenty sous, and two sous for the maid who would bring her meals and do her room.

"That will do," said the girl, and she paid the month's rent and the day's board. I left her telling her I would come back again.

As I went down the stairs I asked the old man to shew me a room for myself. He shewed me a very nice one at a louis a month, and I paid in advance. He then gave me a latch-key, that I might go and come when I liked.

"If you wish to board here," said he, "I think I could give satisfaction."

Having done this good work, I had my dinner

by myself, and then went to a coffee-house where I found the amiable Knight of Malta who was playing. He left the game as soon as he saw me, put the fistfull of gold he had won into his pocket, accosted me with the politeness natural to a Frenchman, and asked me how I had liked the lady who had given me my supper. I told him what had happened, at which he laughed, and asked me to come and see his ballet-girl. We found her under the hairdresser's hands, and she received me with the playful familiarity with which one greets an old acquaintance. I did not think much of her, but I pretended to be immensely struck, with the idea of pleasing the good-natured knight.

When the hairdresser left her, it was time for her to get ready for the theatre, and she dressed herself, without caring who was present. The knight helped her to change her chemise, which she allowed him to do as a matter of course, though indeed she begged me to excuse her.

As I owed her a compliment, I could think of nothing better than to tell her that though she had not offended me she had made me feel very uncomfortable.

"I don't believe you," said she.

"It's true all the same."

She came up to me to verify the fact, and finding I had deceived her, she said half crossly,—

"You are a bad fellow."

The women of Marseilles are undoubtedly the

most profligate in France. They not only pride themselves on never refusing, but also on being the first to propose. This girl shewed me a repeater, for which she had got up a lottery at twelve francs a ticket. She had ten tickets left; I took them all, and so delighted was she to touch my five louis that she came and kissed me, and told the knight that her unfaithfulness to him rested only with me.

"I am charmed to hear it," said the Maltese. He asked me to sup with her, and I accepted the invitation, but the sole pleasure I had was looking at the knight at work. He was far inferior to Dolei!

I wished them good night, and went to the house where I had placed the poor girl. The maid shewed me to my room, and I asked her if I might go to the garret. She took the light, I followed her up, and Rosalie, as the poor girl was named, heard my voice and opened the door. I told the maid to wait for me in my room, and I went in and sat down on the bed.

"Are you contented, dear?" I said.

"I am quite happy."

"Then I hope you will be kind, and find room for me in your bed."

"You may come if you like, but I must tell you that you will not find me a maid, as I have had one lover."

"You told me a lie, then?"

"Forgive me, I could not guess you would be my lover."

"I forgive you willingly; all the more so as I am no great stickler for maidenheads."

She was as gentle as a lamb, and allowed me to gaze on all those charms of which my hands and my lips disputed the possession; and the notion that I was master of all these treasures put fire in all my veins, but her submissive air distressed me.

"How is it you do not partake my desires?" said I.

"I dare not, lest you take me for a pretender."

Artifice or studied coquetry might have prompted such an answer, but the real timidity and the frankness with which these words were uttered could not have been assumed. Impatient to gain possession of her I took off my clothes, and on getting into bed to her I was astonished to find her a maid.

"Why did you tell me you had a lover?" said I. "I never heard of a girl telling a lie of that sort before."

"All the same I did not tell a lie, but I am very glad that I seem as if I had done so."

"Tell me all about it."

"Certainly I will, for I want to win your confidence. This is the story:

"Two years ago my mother, though she was hot-tempered, still loved me. I was a needle-woman, and

earned from twenty to thirty sous a day. Whatever I earned I gave my mother. I had never had a lover, never thought of such a thing, and when my goodness was praised I felt inclined to laugh. I had been brought up from a child never to look at young men when I met them in the street, and never to reply to them when they addressed any impudence to me.

“Two months ago a fine enough looking young man, a native of Genoa, and a merchant in a small way, came to my mother to get her to wash some very fine cotton stockings which the sea-water had stained. When he saw me he was very complimentary, but in an honest way. I liked him, and, no doubt seeing it, he came and came again every evening. My mother was always present at our interviews, and he looked at me and talked to me, but did not so much as ask to kiss my hand. My mother was very pleased to notice that the young man liked me, and often scolded me because I was not polite enough to him. In time he had to go to Genoa in a small ship which belonged to him, and which was laden with goods. He assured us that he would return again the next spring and declare his intentions. He said he hoped he should find me as good as ever, and still without any lover. This was enough; my mother looked upon him as my betrothed, and let us talk together at the door till midnight. When he went I would shut the door and lie down beside my mother, who was always asleep.

“Four or five days before his departure, he took my arm and got me to go with him to a place about fifty paces from the house to drink a glass of Muscat at a Greek’s, who kept his tavern open all night. We were only away for half an hour, and then it was that he first kissed me. When I got home I found my mother awake, and told her all; it seemed so harmless to me.

“Next day, excited by the recollection of what had happened the night before, I went with him again, and love began to gain ground. We indulged in caresses which were no longer innocent, as we well knew. However, we forgave each other, as we had abstained from the chief liberty.

“The day after, my lover—as he had to journey in the night—took leave of my mother, and as soon as she was in bed I was not long in granting what I desired as much as he. We went to the Greek’s, ate and drank, and our heated senses gained love’s cause; we forgot our duty, and fancied our misdemeanour a triumph.

“Afterwards we fell asleep, and when we awoke we saw our fault in the clear, cold light of day. We parted sorrowful rather than rejoicing, and the reception my mother gave me was like that you witnessed this morning. I assured her that marriage would take away the shame of my sin, and with this she took up a stick and would have

done for me, if I had not taken to my heels, more from instinct than from any idea of what I was doing.

"Once in the street I knew not where to turn, and taking refuge in a church I stayed there like one in a dream till noon. Think of my position. I was hungry, I had no refuge, nothing but the clothes I wore, nothing that would get me a morsel of bread. A woman accosted me in the street. I knew her and I also knew that she kept a servants' agency. I asked her forthwith if she could get me a place.

"'I had enquiries about a maid this morning,' said she, 'but it is for a gay woman, and you are pretty. You would have a good deal of difficulty in remaining virtuous.'

"'I can keep off the infection,' I answered, 'and in the position I am in I cannot pick and choose.'

"She thereupon took me to the lady, who was delighted to see me, and still more delighted when I told her that I had never had anything to do with a man. I have repented of this lie bitterly enough, for in the week I spent at that profligate woman's house I have had to endure the most humiliating insults that an honest girl ever suffered. No sooner did the men who came to the house hear that I was a maid than they longed to slake their brutal lust

upon me, offering me gold if I would submit to their caresses. I refused and was reviled, but that was not all. Five or six times every day I was obliged to remain a witness of the disgusting scenes enacted between my mistress and her customers, who, when I was compelled to light them about the house at night, overwhelmed me with insults, because I would not do them a disgusting service for a twelve-sous piece. I could not bear this sort of life much longer, and I was thinking of drowning myself. When you came you treated me so ignominiously that my resolve to die was strengthened, but you were so kind and polite as you went away that I fell in love with you directly, thinking that Providence must have sent you to snatch me away from the abyss. I thought your fine presence might calm my mother and persuade her to take me back till my lover came to marry me. I was undeceived, and I saw that she took me for a prostitute. Now, if you like, I am altogether yours, and I renounce my lover of whom I am no longer worthy. Take me as your maid, I will love you and you only; I will submit myself to you and do whatever you bid me."

Whether it were weakness or virtue on my part, this tale of woe and a mother's too great severity drew tears from my eyes, and when she saw my emotion she wept profusely, for her heart was in need of some relief.

"I think, my poor Rosalie, you have only one chemise."

"Alas! that is all."

"Comfort yourself, my dear; all your wants shall be supplied to-morrow, and in the evening you shall sup with me in my room on the second floor. I will take care of you."

"You pity me, then?"

"I fancy there is more love than pity in it."

"Would to God it were so!"

This "would to God," which came from the very depths of her soul, sent me away in a merry mood. The servant who had been waiting for me for two hours, and was looking rather glum, relaxed when she saw the colour of a crown which I gave her by way of atonement.

"Tell your master," said I, "that Rosalie will sup with me to-morrow; let us have a fasting dinner, but let it be a good one."

I returned to my inn quite in love with Rosalie, and I congratulated myself on having at last heard a true tale from a pretty mouth. She appeared to me so well disposed that her small failing seemed to make her shine the more. I resolved never to abandon her, and I did so in all sincerity; was I not in love?

After I had had my chocolate next morning I went out with a guide to the shops, where I got the

necessary articles, paying a good but not an excessive price. Rosalie was only fifteen, but with her figure, her well-formed breasts, and her rounded arms, she would have been taken for twenty. Her shape was so imprinted on my brain that everything I got for her fitted as if she had been measured for it. This shopping took up all the morning, and in the afternoon the man took her a small trunk containing two dresses, chemises, petticoats, handkerchiefs, stockings, gloves, caps, a pair of slippers, a fan, a work-bag, and a mantle. I was pleased at giving her such a delightful surprise, and I longed for supper-time that I might enjoy the sight of her pleasure.

The Knight of Malta came to dine with me without ceremony, and I was charmed to see him. After we had dined he persuaded me to go to the theatre, as in consequence of the suspense of the subscription arrangements the boxes would be filled with all the quality in Marseilles.

"There will be no loose women in the amphitheatre," said he, "as everybody has to pay."

That decided me and I went. He presented me to a lady with an excellent connection, who asked me to come and see her. I excused myself on the plea that I was leaving so shortly. Nevertheless she was very useful to me on my second visit to Marseilles. Her name was Madame Audibert.

I did not wait for the play to end, but went where love called me. I had a delightful surprise when I saw Rosalie; I should not have known her. But I cannot resist the pleasure of recalling her picture as she stood before me then, despite the years that have rolled by since that happy moment.

Rosalie was an enticing-looking brunette, above the middle height. Her face was a perfect oval, and exquisitely proportioned. Two fine black eyes shed a soft and ravishing light around. Her eyebrows were arched, and she had a wealth of hair, black and shining as ebony; her skin was white and lightly tinged with colour. On her chin was a dimple, and her slightest smile summoned into being two other dimples, one on each cheek. Her mouth was small, disclosing two rows of fairest orient pearls, and from her red lips flowed forth an indefinable sweetness. The lower lip projected ever so lightly, and seemed designed to hold a kiss. I have spoken of her arms, her breast, and her figure, which left nothing to be desired, but I must add to this catalogue of her charms, that her hand was exquisitely shaped, and that her foot was the smallest I have ever seen. As to her other beauties, I will content myself with saying that they were in harmony with those I have described.

To see her at her best, one had to see her

smiling; and hitherto she had been sad or vexed—states of mind which detract from a woman's appearance. But now sadness was gone, and gratitude and pleasure had taken its place. I examined her closely, and felt proud, as I saw what a transformation I had effected; but I concealed my surprise, lest she should think I had formed an unfavourable impression of her. I proceeded, therefore, to tell her that I should expose myself to ridicule if I attempted to keep a beauty like herself for a servant.

“You shall be my mistress,” I said, “and my servants shall respect you as if you were my wife.”

At this Rosalie, as if I had given her another being, began to try and express her gratitude for what I had done. Her words, which passion made confused, increased my joy; here was no art nor deceit, but simple nature.

There was no mirror in her garret, so she had dressed by her sense of touch, and I could see that she was afraid to stand up and look at herself in the mirror in my room. I knew the weak spot in all women's hearts (which men are very wrong in considering as matter for reproach), and I encouraged her to admire herself, whereupon she could not restrain a smile of satisfaction.

“I think I must be in disguise,” said she, “for I have never seen myself so decked out before.”

She praised the tasteful simplicity of the dress I had chosen, but was vexed at the thought that her mother would still be displeased.

"Think no more of your mother, dearest one. You look like a lady of quality, and I shall be quite proud when the people at Genoa ask me if you are my daughter."

"At Genoa?"

"Yes, at Genoa. Why do you blush?"

"From surprise; perhaps I may see there one whom I have not yet forgotten."

"Would you like to stay here better?"

"No, no! Love me and be sure that I love you and for your own sake, not from any thought of my own interests."

"You are moved, my angel; let me wipe away your tears with kisses."

She fell into my arms, and she relieved the various feelings of which her heart was full by weeping for some time. I did not try to console her, for she had not grief; she wept as tender souls, and women, more especially, often will. We had a delicious supper to which I did honour for two, for she ate nothing. I asked her if she was so unfortunate as not to care for good food.

"I have as good an appetite as anyone," she replied, "and an excellent digestion. You shall see for yourself when I grow more accustomed to my sudden happiness."

"At least you can drink; this wine is admirable. If you prefer Greek muscat I will send for some. It will remind you of your lover."

"If you love me at all, I beg you will spare me that mortification."

"You shall have no more mortification from me, I promise you. It was only a joke, and I beg your pardon for it."

"As I look upon you I feel in despair at not having known you first."

"That feeling of yours, which wells forth from the depths of your open soul, is grand. You are beautiful and good, for you only yielded to the voice of love with the prospect of becoming his wife; and when I think what you are to me I am in despair at not being sure you love me. An evil genius whispers in my ear that you only bear with me because I had the happiness of helping you."

"Indeed, that is an evil genius. To be sure, if I had met you in the street I should not have fallen head over ears in love with you, like a wanton, but you would certainly have pleased me. I am sure I love you, and not for what you have done for me; for if I were rich and you were poor, I would do anything in the world for you. But I don't want it to be like that, for I had rather be your debtor than for you to be

mine. These are my real feelings, and you can guess the rest."

We were still talking on the same subject when midnight struck, and my old landlord came and asked me if I were pleased.

"I must thank you," I replied, "I am delighted. Who cooked this delicious supper?"

"My daughter."

"She understands her craft; tell her I thought it excellent."

"Yes, sir, but it is dear."

"Not too dear for me. You shall be pleased with me as I with you, and take care to have as good a supper to-morrow evening, as I hope the lady will be well enough to do justice to the products of your daughter's culinary skill."

"Bed is a capital place to get an appetite. Ah! it is sixty years since I have had anything to do with that sort of thing. What are you laughing at, mademoiselle?"

"At the delight with which you must recollect it."

"You are right, it is a pleasant recollection; and thus I am always ready to forgive young folks the peccadilloes that love makes them commit."

"You are a wise old man," said I, "everyone should sympathise with the tenderest of all our mortal follies."

"If the old man is wise," said Rosalie, when

he had left the room, "my mother must be very foolish."

"Would you like me to take you to the play to-morrow?"

"Pray do not. I will come if you like, but it would vex me very much. I don't want to walk out with you or to go to the theatre with you here. Good heavens! What would people say. No, neither at Marseilles; but elsewhere, anything you please and with all my heart."

"Very good, my dear, just as you please. But look at your room; no more garret for you; and in three days we will start."

"So soon?"

"Yes; tell me to-morrow what you require for the journey, for I don't want you to lack for anything, and if you leave it all to me I might forget something which would vex me."

"Well, I should like another cloak, a cloak with a lining, some boots, a night-cap, and a prayer-book."

"You know how to read, do you?"

"Certainly; and I can write fairly well."

"I am glad to hear it. Your asking me so freely for what you want is a true proof of your love; where confidence dwells not there is no love. I will not forget anything, but your feet are so small that I should advise you to get your boots yourself."

Our talk was so pleasant, and I experienced such delight in studying her disposition, that we did not go to bed till five o'clock. In the arms of love and sleep we spent seven delicious hours, and when we rose at noon we were fast lovers. She called me *thou*, talked of love and not of gratitude, and, grown more familiar with her new estate, laughed at her troubles. She kissed me at every opportunity, called me her darling boy, her joy, and as the present moment is the only real thing in this life, I enjoyed her love, I was pleased with her caresses, and put away all ideas of the dreadful future, which has only one certainty—death, *ultima linea rerum*.

The second night was far sweeter than the first; she had made a good supper, and drunk well, though moderately; thus she was disposed to refine on her pleasure, and to deliver herself with greater ardour to all the voluptuous enjoyments which love inspires.

I gave her a pretty watch and a gold shuttle for her to amuse herself with.

"I wanted it," said she, "but I should never have dared to ask for it."

I told her that this fear of my displeasure made me doubt once more whether she really loved me. She threw herself into my arms, and promised that henceforth she would shew me the utmost confidence.

I was pleased to educate this young girl, and I felt that when her mind had been developed she would be perfect.

On the fourth day I warned her to hold herself in readiness to start at a moment's notice. I had said nothing about my plans to Costa or Le Duc, but Rosalie knew that I had two servants, and I told her that I should often make them talk on the journey for the sake of the laughter their folly would afford me.

"You, my dear," I had said to her, "must be very reserved with them, and not allow them to take the slightest liberty. Give them your orders as a mistress, but without pride, and you will be obeyed and respected. If they forget themselves in the slightest particular, tell me at once."

I started from the hotel of the "Treize Cantons" with four post-horses, Le Duc and Costa sitting on the coachman's seat. The guide, whom I had paid well for his services, took us to Rosalie's door. I got out of the carriage, and after thanking the kindly old landlord, who was sorry to lose so good a boarder, I made her get in, sat down beside her, and ordered the postillions to go to Toulon, as I wished to see that fine port before returning to Italy. We got to Toulon at five o'clock.

My Rosalie behaved herself at supper like the mistress of a house accustomed to the best society. I noticed that Le Duc as head man made Costa

wait upon her, but I got over him by telling my sweetheart that he would have the honour of doing her hair, as he could do it as well as the best barber in Paris. He swallowed the golden pill, and gave in with a good grace, and said, with a profound bow, that he hoped to give madam satisfaction.

We went out next morning to see the port, and were shewn over the place by the commandant, whose acquaintance we made by a lucky chance. He offered his arm to Rosalie, and treated her with the consideration she deserved for her appearance and the good sense of her questions. The commandant accepted my invitation to dinner, at which Rosalie spoke to the point though not to excess, and received the polite compliments of our worthy guest with much grace. In the afternoon he took us over the arsenal, and after having him to dinner I could not refuse his invitation to supper. There was no difficulty about Rosalie; the commandant introduced her immediately to his wife, his daughter, and his son. I was delighted to see that her manner with ladies even surpassed her manner with gentlemen. She was one of Nature's own ladies. The commandant's wife and daughter caressed her again and again, and she received their attentions with that modest sensibility which is the seal of a good education.

They asked me to dinner the next day, but I

was satisfied with what I had seen, so I took leave, intending to start on the morrow.

When we got back to the inn I told her how pleased I was with her, and she threw her arms round my neck for joy.

"I am always afraid," said she, "of being asked who I am."

"You needn't be afraid, dearest; in France no gentleman or lady would think of asking such a question."

"But if they did, what ought I to do?"

"You should make use of an evasion."

"What's an evasion?"

"A way of escaping from a difficulty without satisfying impertinent curiosity."

"Give me an example."

"Well, if such a question were asked you, you might say, 'You had better ask this gentleman.'"

"I see, the question is avoided; but is not that impolite?"

"Yes; but not so impolite as to ask an embarrassing question."

"And what would you say if the question was passed on to you?"

"Well, my answer would vary in a ratio with the respect in which I held the questioner. I would not tell the truth, but I should say something. And I am glad to see you attentive to my lessons. Always ask questions, and you will always find me

ready to answer, for I want to teach you. And now let us to bed; we have to start for Antibes at an early hour, and love will reward you for the pleasure you have given me to-day."

At Antibes I hired a felucca to take me to Genoa, and as I intended to return by the same route I had my carriage warehoused for a small monthly payment. We started early with a good wind, but the sea becoming rough, and Rosalie being mortally afraid, I had the felucca rowed into Villafranca, where I engaged a carriage to take me to Nice. The weather kept us back for three days, and I felt obliged to call on the commandant, an old officer named Peterson.

He gave me an excellent reception, and after the usual compliments had passed, said,—

"Do you know a Russian who calls himself Charles Ivanoff?"

"I saw him once at Grenoble."

"It is said that he has escaped from Siberia, and that he is the younger son of the Duke of Courland."

"So I have heard, but I know no proof of his claim to the title."

"He is at Genoa, where it is said a banker is to give him twenty thousand crowns. In spite of that, no one would give him a sou here, so I sent him to Genoa at my own expense, to rid the place of him."

I felt very glad that the Russian had gone away before my arrival. An officer named Ramini, who was staying at the same inn as myself, asked if I would mind taking charge of a packet which M. de St. Pierre, the Spanish consul, had to send to the Marquis Grimaldi, at Genoa. It was the nobleman I had just seen at Avignon, and I was pleased to execute the commission. The same officer asked me whether I had ever seen a certain Madame Stuard.

"She came here a fortnight ago with a man who calls himself her husband. The poor devils hadn't a penny, and she, a great beauty, enchanted everybody, but would give no one a smile or a word."

"I have both seen and know her," I answered. "I furnished her with the means to come here. How could she leave Nice without any money?"

"That's just what no one can understand. She went off in a carriage, and the landlord's bill was paid. I was interested in the woman. The Marquis Grimaldi told me that she had refused a hundred louis he offered her, and that a Venetian of his acquaintance had fared just as badly. Perhaps that is you?"

"It is, and I gave her some money despite my treatment."

M. Peterson came to see me, and was enchanted

with Rosalie's amiable manner. This was another conquest for her, and I duly complimented her upon it.

Nice is a terribly dull place, and strangers are tormented by the midges, who prefer them to the inhabitants. However, I amused myself at a small bank at faro, which was held at a coffee-house, and at which Rosalie, whose play I directed, won a score of Piedmontese pistoles. She put her little earnings into a purse, and told me she liked to have some money of her own. I scolded her for not having told me so before, and reminded her of her promise.

"I don't really want it," said she, "it's only my thoughtlessness."

We soon made up our little quarrel.

In such ways did I make this girl my own, in the hope that for the remnant of my days she would be mine, and so I should not be forced to fly from one lady to another. But inexorable fate ordained it otherwise.

The weather grew fine again, and we got on board once more, and the next day arrived at Genoa, which I had never seen before. I put up at "St. Martin's Inn," and for decency's sake took two rooms, but they were adjoining one another. The following day I sent the packet to M. Grimaldi, and a little later I left my card at his palace.

My guide took me to a linen-draper's, and I

bought some stuff for Rosalie, who was in want of linen. She was very pleased with it.

We were still at table when the Marquis Grimaldi was announced; he kissed me and thanked me for bringing the parcel. His next remark referred to Madame Stuard. I told him what had happened, and he laughed, saying that he was not quite sure what he would have done under the circumstances.

I saw him looking at Rosalie attentively, and I told him she was as good as she was beautiful.

"I want to find her a maid," I said, "a good seamstress, who could go out with her, and above all who could talk Italian to her, for I want her to learn the language that I may take her into society at Florence, Rome and Naples."

"Don't deprive Genoa of the pleasure of entertaining her," said the marquis. "I will introduce her under whatever name she pleases, and in my own house to begin with."

"She has good reasons for preserving her incognito here."

"Ah, I see! Do you think of staying here long?"

"A month, or thereabouts, and our pleasures will be limited to seeing the town and its surroundings and going to the theatre. We shall also enjoy the pleasures of the table. I hope to

eat champignons every day, they are better here than anywhere else."

"An excellent plan. I couldn't suggest a better. I am going to see what I can do in the way of getting you a maid, mademoiselle."

"You sir? How can I deserve such great kindness?"

"My interest in you is the greater, as I think you come from Marseilles."

Rosalie blushed. She was not aware that she lisped, and that this betrayed her. I extricated her from her confusion by telling the marquis his conjecture was well founded.

I asked him how I could get the *Journal des Savans*, the *Mercure de France*, and other papers of the same description. He promised to send me a man who would get me all that kind of thing. He added that if I would allow him to send me some of his excellent chocolate he would come and breakfast with us. I said that both gift and guest were vastly agreeable to me.

As soon as he had gone Rosalie asked me to take her to a milliner's.

"I want ribbons and other little things," said she, "but I should like to bargain for them and pay for them out of my own money, without your having anything to do with it."

"Do whatever you like, my dear, and afterwards we will go to the play."

The milliner to whom we went proved to be a Frenchwoman. It was a charming sight to see Rosalie shopping. She put on an important air, seemed to know all about it, ordered bonnets in the latest fashion, bargained, and contrived to spend five or six louis with great grandeur. As we left the shop I told her that I had been taken for her footman, and I meant to be revenged. So saying, I made her come into a jeweller's, where I bought her a necklace, ear-rings, and brooches in imitation diamonds, and without letting her say a word I paid the price and left the shop.

"You have bought me some beautiful things," said she, "but you are too lavish with your money; if you had bargained you might have saved four louis at least."

"Very likely, dearest, but I never was any hand at a bargain."

I took her to the play, but as she did not understand the language she got dreadfully tired, and asked me to take her home at the end of the first act, which I did very willingly. When we got in I found a box waiting for me from M. Grimaldi. It proved to contain twenty-four pounds of chocolate. Costa, who had boasted of his skill in making chocolate in the Spanish fashion, received orders to make us three cups in the morning.

At nine o'clock the marquis arrived with a tradesman, who sold me some beautiful oriental

materials. I gave them to Rosalie to make two *mezzaro* for herself. The *mezzaro* is a kind of hooded cloak worn by the Genoese women, as the *cendal* is worn at Venice, and the *mantilla* at Madrid.

I thanked M. Grimaldi for the chocolate, which was excellent; Costa was quite proud of the praise the marquis gave him. Le Duc came in to announce a woman, whose name I did not know.

"It's the mother of the maid I have engaged," said M. Grimaldi.

She came in, and I saw before me a well-dressed woman, followed by a girl from twenty to twenty-four years old, who pleased me at the first glance. The mother thanked the marquis, and presented her daughter to Rosalie, enumerating her good qualities, and telling her that she would serve her well, and walk with her when she wished to go out.

"My daughter," she added, "speaks French, and you will find her a good, faithful, and obliging girl."

She ended by saying that her daughter had been in service lately with a lady, and that she would be obliged if she could have her meals by herself.

The girl was named Véronique. Rosalie told her that she was a good girl, and that the only way to be respected was to be respectable. Véronique kissed her hand, the mother went away,

and Rosalie took the girl into her room to begin her work.

I did not forget to thank the marquis, for he had evidently chosen a maid more with a view to my likings than to those of my sweetheart. I told him that I should not fail to call on him, and he replied that he would be happy to see me at any hour, and that I should easily find him at his casino at St. Pierre d'Arena, where he often spent the night.

CHAPTER IV

THE PLAY—THE RUSSIAN—PETRI—ROSALIE AT THE CONVENT

WHEN the marquis had gone, seeing Rosalie engaged with Véronique, I set myself to translate the *Ecossaise* for the actors at Genoa, who seemed pretty good ones, to play.

I thought Rosalie looking sad at dinner, and said,—

“What is the matter, dearest? You know I do not like to see you looking melancholy.”

“I am vexed at Véronique’s being prettier than I.”

“I see what you mean; I like that! But console yourself, Véronique is nothing compared to you, in my eyes at all events. You are my only beauty; but to reassure you I will ask M. de Grimaldi to tell her mother to come and fetch her away, and to get me another maid as ugly as possible.”

“Oh, no! pray do not do so; he will think I am jealous, and I wouldn’t have him think so for the world.”

"Well, well, smile again if you do not wish to vex me."

"I shall soon do that, if, as you assure me, she will not make me lose your love. But what made the old gentleman get me a girl like that? Do you think he did it out of mischief?"

"No, I don't think so. I am sure, on the other hand, that he wanted to let you know that you need not fear being compared with anybody. Are you pleased with her in other respects?"

"She works well, and she is very respectful. She does not speak four words without addressing me as signora, and she is careful to translate what she says from Italian into French. I hope that in a month I shall speak well enough for us to dispense with her services when we go to Florence. I have ordered Le Duc to clear out the room I have chosen for her, and I will send her her dinner from our own table. I will be kind to her, but I hope you will not make me wretched."

"I could not do so; and I do not see what there can be in common between the girl and myself."

"Then you will pardon my fears."

"The more readily as they shew your love."

"I thank you, but keep my secret."

I promised never to give a glance to Véronique, of whom I was already afraid, but I loved Rosalie

and would have done anything to save her the least grief.

I set to at my translation after dinner; it was work I liked. I did not go out that day, and I spent the whole of the next morning with M. de Grimaldi.

I went to the banker Belloni and changed all my gold into *gigliati* sequins. I made myself known after the money was changed, and the head cashier treated me with great courtesy. I had bills on this banker for forty thousand Roman crowns, and on Lepri bills for twenty thousand.

Rosalie did not want to go to the play again, so I got her a piece of embroidery to amuse her in the evening. The theatre was a necessity for me; I always went unless it interfered with some still sweeter pleasure. I went by myself, and when I got home I found the marquis talking to my mistress. I was pleased, and after I had embraced the worthy nobleman I complimented Rosalie on having kept him till my arrival, adding gently that she should have put down her work.

"Ask him," she replied, "if he did not make me keep on. He said he would go if I didn't, so I gave in to keep him."

She then rose, stopped working, and in the course of an interesting conversation she succeeded in making the marquis promise to stay to supper, thus forestalling my intention. He was not accus-

tomed to take anything at that hour, and ate little; but I saw he was enchanted with my treasure, and that pleased me, for I did not think I had anything to fear from a man of sixty; besides, I was glad at the opportunity of accustoming Rosalie to good society. I wanted her to be a little coquettish, as a woman never pleases in society unless she shews a desire to please.

Although the position was quite a strange one for her, she made me admire the natural aptitude of women, which may be improved or spoiled by art but which exists more or less in them all, from the throne to the milk-pail. She talked to M. de Grimaldi in a way that seemed to hint she was willing to give a little hope. As our guest did not eat, she said graciously that he must come to dinner some day that she might have an opportunity of seeing whether he really had any appetite.

When he had gone I took her on my knee, and covering her with kisses asked her where she had learnt to talk to great people so well.

"It's an easy matter," she replied. "Your eyes speak to my soul, and tell me what to do and what to say."

A professed rhetorician could not have answered more elegantly or more flatteringly.

I finished the translation; I had it copied out by Costa and took it to Rossi, the manager, who said he would put it on directly, when I told him

I was going to make him a present of the play. I named the actors of my choice, and asked him to bring them to dine with me at my inn, that I might read the play and distribute the parts.

As will be guessed, my invitation was accepted, and Rosalie enjoyed dining with the actors and actresses, and especially hearing herself called Madame Casanova every moment. Véronique explained everything she did not understand.

When my actors were round me in a ring, they begged me to tell them their parts, but I would not give in on this point.

"The first thing to be done," said I, "is for you to listen attentively to the whole piece without minding about your parts. When you know the whole play I will satisfy your curiosity."

I knew that careless or idle actors often pay no attention to anything except their own parts, and thus a piece, though well played in its parts, is badly rendered as a whole.

They submitted with a tolerably good grace, which the high and mighty players of the Comédie Française would certainly not have done. Just as I was beginning my reading the Marquis de Grimaldi and the banker Belloni came in to call on me. I was glad for them to be present at the trial, which only lasted an hour and a quarter.

After I had heard the opinion of the actors, who by their praise of various situations shewed

me that they had taken in the plot, I told Costa to distribute the parts; but no sooner was this done than the first actor and the first actress began to express their displeasure; she, because I had given her the part of Lady Alton; he, because I had not given him Murray's part; but they had to bear it as it was my will. I pleased everybody by asking them all to dinner for the day after the morrow, after dinner the piece to be rehearsed for the first time.

The banker Belloni asked me to dinner for the following day, including my lady, who excused herself with great politeness, in the invitation; and M. Grimaldi was glad to take my place at dinner at her request.

When I got to M. Belloni's, I was greatly surprised to see the impostor Ivanoff, who instead of pretending not to know me, as he ought to have done, came forward to embrace me. I stepped back and bowed, which might be put down to a feeling of respect, although my coldness and scant ceremony would have convinced any observant eye of the contrary. He was well dressed, but seemed sad, though he talked a good deal, and to some purpose, especially on politics. The conversation turned on the Court of Russia, where Elizabeth Petrovna reigned; and he said nothing, but sighed and turned away pretending to wipe the tears from his eyes. At dessert, he asked me if I had heard anything of

Madame Morin, adding, as if to recall the circumstance to my memory, that we had supped together there :

"I believe she is quite well," I answered.

His servant, in yellow and red livery, waited on him at table. After dinner he contrived to tell me that he had a matter of the greatest importance he wanted to discuss with me.

"My only desire sir, is to avoid all appearance of knowing anything about you."

"One word from you will gain me a hundred thousand crowns, and you shall have half."

I turned my back on him, and saw him no more at Genoa.

When I got back to the inn I found M. de Grimaldi giving Rosalie a lesson in Italian.

"She has given me an exquisite dinner," said he, "you must be very happy with her."

In spite of his honest face, M. Grimaldi was in love with her, but I thought I had nothing to fear. Before he went she invited him to come to the rehearsal next day.

When the actors came I noticed amongst them a young man whose face I did not know, and on my enquiring Rossi told me he was the prompter.

"I won't have any prompter; send him about his business."

"We can't get on without him."

"You'll have to; I will be the prompter."

The prompter was dismissed, but the three actresses began to complain.

"If we knew our parts as well as the *pater noster* we should be certain to come to a dead stop if the prompter isn't in his box."

"Very good," said I to the actress, who was to play Lindane, "I will occupy the box myself, but I shall see your drawers."

"You would have some difficulty in doing that," said the first actor, "she doesn't wear any."

"So much the better."

"You know nothing about it," said the actress.

These remarks put us all in high spirits, and the ministers of Thalia ended by promising that they would dispense with a prompter. I was pleased with the way the piece was read, and they said they would be letter-perfect in three days. But something happened.

On the day fixed for the rehearsal they came without the Lindane and Murray. They were not well, but Rossi said they would not fail us eventually. I took the part of Murray, and asked Rosalie to be the Lindane.

"I don't read Italian well enough," she whispered, "and I don't wish to have the actors laughing at me; but Véronique could do it."

"Ask if she will read the part."

However, Véronique said that she could repeat it by heart.

All the better," said I to her, laughing internally, as I thought of Soleure, for I saw that I should thus be obliged to make love to the girl to whom I had not spoken for the fortnight she had been with us. I had not even had a good look at her face. I was so afraid of Rosalie (whom I loved better every day) taking fright.

What I had feared happened. When I took Véronique's hand, and said, "*Si, bella Lindana, debbe amarvi!*" everybody clapped, because I gave the words their proper expression; but glancing at Rosalie I saw a shadow on her face, and I was angry at not having controlled myself better. Nevertheless, I could not help feeling amazed at the way Véronique played the part. When I told her that I adored her she blushed up to her eyes; she could not have played the love-sick girl better.

We fixed a day for the dress-rehearsal at the theatre, and the company announced the first night a week in advance to excite public curiosity. The bills ran:

"We shall give Voltaire's *Ecossaise*, translated by an anonymous author: no prompter will be present."

I cannot give the reader any idea of the trouble I had to quiet Rosalie. She refused to be comforted; wept incessantly, and touched my heart by gentle reproaches.

"You love Véronique," said she, "and you only

translated that piece to have an opportunity of declaring your love."

I succeeded in convincing her that she wronged me, and at last after I had lavished caresses on her she suffered herself to be calmed. Next morning she begged pardon for her jealousy, and to cure it insisted on my speaking constantly to Véronique. Her heroism went farther. She got up before me and sent me my coffee by Véronique, who was as astonished as I was.

At heart Rosalie was a great creature, capable of noble resolves, but like all women she gave way to sudden emotions. From that day she gave me no more signs of jealousy, and treated her maid with more kindness than ever. Véronique was an intelligent and well-mannered girl, and if my heart had not been already occupied she would have reigned there.

The first night of the play I took Rosalie to a box, and she would have Véronique with her. M. de Grimaldi did not leave her for a moment. The play was praised to the skies; the large theatre was full of the best people in Genoa. The actors surpassed themselves, though they had no prompter, and were loudly applauded. The piece ran five nights and was performed to full houses. Rossi, hoping perhaps that I would make him a present of another play, asked my leave to give my lady a superb pelisse of lynx-fur, which pleased her immensely.

I would have done anything to spare my sweetheart the least anxiety, and yet from my want of thought I contrived to vex her. I should never have forgiven myself if Providence had not ordained that I should be the cause of her final happiness.

"I have reason to suspect," she said, one day, "that I am with child, and I am enchanted at the thought of giving you a dear pledge of my love."

"If it comes at such a time it will be mine, and I assure you I shall love it dearly."

"And if it comes two or three weeks sooner you will not be sure that you are the parent?"

"Not quite sure; but I shall love it just as well, and look upon it as my child as well as yours."

"I am sure you must be the father. It is impossible the child can be Petri's, who only knew me once, and then very imperfectly, whilst you and I have lived in tender love for so long a time."

She wept hot tears.

"Calm yourself, dearest, I implore you! You are right; it cannot be Petri's child. You know I love you, and I cannot doubt that you are with child by me and by me alone. If you give me a baby as pretty as yourself, it will be mine indeed. Calm yourself."

"How can I be calm when you can have such a suspicion?"

We said no more about it; but in spite of my tenderness, my caresses, and all the trifling cares

which bear witness to love, she was often sad and thoughtful. How many times I reproached myself bitterly for having let out my silly calculations.

A few days later she gave me a sealed letter, saying,——

“The servant has given me this letter when you were away. I am offended by his doing so, and I want you to avenge me.”

I called the man, and said,——

“Where did you get this letter?”

“From a young man, who is unknown to me. He gave me a crown, and begged me to give the letter to the lady without your seeing me, and he promised to give me two crowns more if I brought him a reply to-morrow. I did not think I was doing wrong, sir, as the lady was at perfect liberty to tell you.”

“That’s all very well, but you must go, as the lady, who gave me the letter unopened, as you can see for yourself, is offended with you.”

I called Le Duc, who paid the man and sent him away. I opened the letter, and found it to be from Petri. Rosalie left my side, not wishing to read the contents. The letter ran as follows:

“I have seen you, my dear Rosalie. It was just as you were coming out of the theatre, escorted by the Marquis de Grimaldi, who is my godfather. I have not deceived you; I was still intending to come and marry you at Marseilles next spring, as I prom-

ised. I love you faithfully, and if you are still my good Rosalie I am ready to marry you here in the presence of my kinsfolk. If you have done wrong I promise never to speak of it, for I know that it was I who led you astray. Tell me, I entreat you, whether I may speak to the Marquis de Grimaldi with regard to you. I am ready to receive you from the hands of the gentleman with whom you are living, provided you are not his wife. Be sure, if you are still free, that you can only recover your honour by marrying your seducer."

"This letter comes from an honourable man who is worthy of Rosalie," I thought to myself, "and that's more than I shall be, unless I marry her myself. But Rosalie must decide."

I called her to me, gave her the letter, and begged her to read it attentively. She did so, and gave it me back, asking me if I advised her to accept Petri's offer.

"If you do, dear Rosalie, I shall die of grief; but if I do not yield you, my honour bids me marry you, and that I am quite ready to do."

At this the charming girl threw herself on my breast, crying in the voice of true love, "I love you and you alone, darling; but it is not true that your honour bids you marry me. Ours is a marriage of the heart; our love is mutual, and that is enough for my happiness."

"Dear Rosalie, I adore you, but I am the best

judge of my own honour. If Petri is a well-to-do man and a man who would make you happy, I must either give you up or take you myself."

"No, no; there is no hurry to decide. If you love me I am happy, for I love you and none other. I shall not answer the letter, and I don't want to hear anything more of Petri."

"You may be sure that I will say no more of him, but I am sure that the marquis will have a hand in it."

"I daresay, but he won't speak to me twice on the subject."

After this treaty—a more sincere one than the Powers of Europe usually make—I resolved to leave Genoa as soon as I got some letters for Florence and Rome. In the meanwhile all was peace and love between myself and Rosalie. She had not the slightest shadow of jealousy in her soul, and M. de Grimaldi was the sole witness of our happiness.

Five or six days later I went to see the marquis at his casino at St. Pierre d'Arena, and he accosted me by saying that he was happy to see me as he had an important matter he wished to discuss with me. I guessed what it would be, but begged him to explain himself. He then spoke as follows:

"A worthy merchant of the town brought his nephew, a young man named Petri, to see me two days ago. He told me that the young man is my godson, and he asked me to protect him. I an-

swered that as his godfather I owed him my protection, and I promised to do what I could.

“He left my godson to talk it over with me, and he informed me that he knew your mistress before you did at Marseilles, that he had promised to marry her next spring, that he had seen her in my company, and that having followed us he found out that she lived with you. He was told that she was your wife, but not believing it, wrote her a letter saying that he was ready to marry her; but this letter fell into your hands, and he has had no reply to it.

“He could not make up his mind to lose a hope which made his happiness, so he resolved to ascertain, through my good offices, whether Rosalie would accept his proposition. He flatters himself that on his informing me of his prosperous condition, I can tell you that he is a likely man to make his wife happy. I told him that I knew you, and would speak to you on the matter, and afterwards inform him of the result of our interview.

“I have made enquiries into his condition, and find that he has already amassed a considerable sum of money. His credit, morals, and reputation, are all excellent; besides, he is his uncle’s sole heir, and the uncle passes for a man very comfortably off. And now, my dear M. Casanova, tell me what answer I am to make.”

“Tell him that Rosalie is much obliged to him, and begs him to forget her. We are going away in

three or four days. Rosalie loves me, and I her, and I am ready to marry her whenever she likes."

"That's plain speaking; but I should have thought a man like you would prefer freedom to a woman, however beautiful, to whom you would be bound by indissoluble ties. Will you allow me to speak to Rosalie myself about it?"

"You need not ask my leave; speak to her, but in your own person and not as representing my opinions. I adore her, and would not have her think that I could cherish the thought of separating from her."

"If you don't want me to meddle in the matter, tell me so frankly."

"On the contrary, I wish you to see for yourself that I am not the tyrant of the woman I adore."

"I will talk to her to-night."

I did not come home till supper-time, that the marquis might say what he had to say in perfect freedom. The noble Genoese supped with us, and the conversation turned on indifferent subjects. After he had gone, my sweetheart told me what had passed between them. He had spoken to her in almost the same words that he had addressed to me, and our replies were nearly identical, though she had requested the marquis to say no more about his godson, to which request he had assented.

We thought the matter settled, and busied ourselves with preparations for our departure; but three

or four days after, the marquis (who we imagined had forgotten all about his godson) came and asked us to dine with him at St. Pierre d'Arena, where Rosalie had never been.

"I want you to see my beautiful garden before you go," said M. Grimaldi to her; "it will be one more pleasant recollection of your stay for me."

We went to see him at noon the next day. He was with an elderly man and woman, to whom he introduced us. He introduced me by name, and Rosalie as a person who belonged to me.

We proceeded to walk in the garden, where the two old people got Rosalie between them, and overwhelmed her with politeness and complimentary remarks. She, who was happy and in high spirits, answered in Italian, and delighted them by her intelligence, and the grace which she gave to her mistakes in grammar.

The servants came to tell us that dinner was ready, and what was my astonishment on entering the room to see the table laid for six. I did not want much insight now to see through the marquis's trick, but it was too late. We sat down, and just then a young man came in.

"You are a little late," said the marquis; and then, without waiting for his apology, he introduced him to me as M. Petri, his godson, and nephew to his other guests, and he made him sit down at his left hand, Rosalie being on his right. I sat opposite

to her, and seeing that she turned as pale as death the blood rushed to my face; I was terribly enraged. This small despot's plot seemed disgraceful to me; it was a scandalous insult to Rosalie and myself—an insult which should be washed away in blood. I was tempted to stab him at his table, but in spite of my agitation I constrained myself. What could I do? Take Rosalie's arm, and leave the room with her? I thought it over, but foreseeing the consequences I could not summon up courage.

I have never spent so terrible an hour as at that fatal dinner. Neither Rosalie nor myself ate a morsel, and the marquis who helped all the guests was discreet enough not to see that we left one course after another untouched. Throughout dinner he only spoke to Petri and his uncle, giving them opportunities for saying how large a trade they did. At dessert the marquis told the young man that he had better go and look after his affairs, and after kissing his hand he withdrew with a bow to which nobody replied.

Petri was about twenty-four, of a moderate height, with ordinary but yet good-natured and honest features; respectful in his manner, and sensible though not witty in what he said. After all was said and done, I thought him worthy of Rosalie, but I shuddered at the thought that if she became his wife she was lost to me for ever. After

he had gone, the marquis said he was sorry he had not known him before as he might be of use to him in his business.

"However, we will see to that in the future," said he, meaningly, "I mean to make his fortune."

At this the uncle and aunt, who no doubt knew what to say, began to laud and extol their nephew, and ended by saying that as they had no children they were delighted that Petri, who would be their heir, was to have his excellency's patronage.

"We are longing," they added, "to see the girl from Marseilles he is going to marry. We should welcome her as a beloved daughter."

Rosalie whispered to me that she could bear it no longer, and begged me to take her away. We rose, and after we had saluted the company with cold dignity we left the room. The marquis was visibly disconcerted. As he escorted us to the door he stammered out compliments, for the want of something to say, telling Rosalie that he should not have the honour of seeing her that evening, but that he hoped to call on her the next day.

When we were by ourselves we seemed to breathe again, and spoke to one another to relieve ourselves of the oppression which weighed on our minds.

Rosalie thought, as well as I, that the marquis had played us a shameful trick, and she told me I ought to write him a note, begging him not to give himself the trouble of calling on us again.

"I will find some means of vengeance," said I; "but I don't think it would be a good plan to write to him. We will hasten our preparations for leaving, and receive him to-morrow with that cold politeness which bears witness to indignation. Above all, we will not make the slightest reference to his godson."

"If Petri really loves me," said she, "I pity him. I think he is a good fellow, and I don't feel angry with him for being present at dinner, as he may possibly be unaware that his presence was likely to give me offence. But I still shudder when I think of it: I thought I should have died when our eyes met! Throughout dinner he could not see my eyes, as I kept them nearly shut, and indeed he could hardly see me. Did he look at me while he was talking?"

"No, he only looked at me. I am as sorry for him as you are, for, as you say, he looks an honest fellow."

"Well, it's over now, and I hope I shall make a good supper. Did you notice what the aunt said? I am sure she was in the plot. She thought she would gain me over by saying she was ready to treat me like her own child. She was a decent-looking woman, too."

We made a good supper, and a pleasant night inclined us to forget the insult the marquis had put upon us. When we woke up in the morning we

laughed at it. The marquis came to see us in the evening, and greeting me with an air of mingled confusion and vexation, he said that he knew he had done wrong in surprising me as he had, but that he was ready to do anything in his power by way of atonement, and to give whatever satisfaction I liked.

Rosalie did not give me time to answer. "If you really feel," said she, "that you have insulted us, that is enough; we are amply avenged. But all the same, sir, we shall be on our guard against you for the future, though that will be for a short while, as we are just leaving."

With this proud reply she made him a low bow and left the room.

When he was left alone with me M. Grimaldi addressed me as follows:

"I take a great interest in your mistress's welfare; and as I feel sure that she cannot long be happy in her present uncertain position, while I am sure that she would make my godson an excellent wife, I was determined that both of you should make his acquaintance, for Rosalie herself knows very little of him. I confess that the means I employed were dishonourable, but you will pardon the means for the sake of the excellent end I had in view. I hope you will have a pleasant journey, and that you may live for a long time in uninterrupted happiness with your charming mistress. I hope you

will write to me, and always reckon on my standing your friend, and doing everything in my power for you. Before I go, I will tell you something which will give you an idea of the excellent disposition of young Petri, to whose happiness Rosalie seems essential.

“He only told me the following, after I had absolutely refused to take charge of a letter he had written to Rosalie, despairing of being able to send it any other way. After assuring me that Rosalie had loved him, and that consequently she could not have any fixed aversion for him, he added that if the fear of being with child was the reason why she would not marry him he would agree to put off the marriage till after the child was born, provided that she would agree to stay in Genoa in hiding, her presence to be unknown to all save himself. He offers to pay all the expenses of her stay. He made a remarkably wise reflection when we were talking it over.

“‘If she gave birth to a child too soon after our marriage,’ said he, ‘both her honour and mine would suffer hurt; she might also lose the liking of my relations, and if Rosalie is to be my wife I want her to be happy in everything.’”

At this Rosalie, who had no doubt been listening at the door after the manner of her sex, burst into the room, and astonished me by the following speech:

“If M. Petri did not tell you that it was possible

that I might be with child by him, he is a right honest man, but now I tell you so myself. I do not think it likely, but still it is possible. Tell him, sir, that I will remain at Genoa until the child is born, in the case of my being pregnant, of which I have no certain knowledge, or until I am quite sure that I am not with child. If I do have a child the truth will be made known. In the case of there being no doubt of M. Petri's being the parent, I am ready to marry him; but if he sees for himself that the child is not his I hope he will be reasonable enough to let me alone for the future. As to the expenses and my lodging at Genoa, tell him that he need not trouble himself about either."

I was petrified. I saw the consequence of my own imprudent words, and my heart seemed broken. The marquis asked me if this decision was given with my authority, and I replied that as my sweetheart's will was mine he might take her words for law. He went away in high glee, for he foresaw that all would go well with his plans when once he was able to exert his influence on Rosalie. The absent always fare ill.

"You want to leave me, then, Rosalie?" said I, when we were alone.

"Yes, dearest, but it will not be for long."

"I think we shall never see each other again."

"Why not, dearest? You have only to remain faithful to me. Listen to me. Your honour and my

own make it imperative that I should convince Petri that I am not with child by him, and you that I am with child by you."

"I never doubted it, dear Rosalie."

"Yes, dear, you doubted it once and that is enough. Our parting will cost me many a bitter tear, but these pangs are necessary to my future happiness. I hope you will write to me, and after the child is born it will be for you to decide on how I shall rejoin you. If I am not pregnant I will rejoin you in a couple of months at latest."

"Though I may grieve at your resolve I will not oppose it, for I promised I would never cross you. I suppose you will go into a convent; and the marquis must find you a suitable one, and protect you like a father. Shall I speak to him on the subject? I will leave you as much money as you will want."

"That will not be much. As for M. de Grimaldi, he is bound in honour to procure me an asylum. I don't think it will be necessary for you to speak to him about it."

She was right, and I could not help admiring the truly astonishing tact of this girl.

In the morning I heard that the self-styled Ivanoff had made his escape an hour before the police were to arrest him at the suit of the banker, who had found out that one of the bills he had presented was forged. He had escaped on foot, leaving all his baggage behind him.

Next day the marquis came to tell Rosalie that his godson had no objection to make to her plan. He added that the young man hoped she would become his wife, whether the child proved to be his or not.

"He may hope as much as he likes," said Rosalie, with a smile.

"He also hopes that you will allow him to call on you now and then. I have spoken to my kinswoman, the mother-superior of —— convent. You are to have two rooms, and a very good sort of woman is to keep you company, wait on you, and nurse you when the time comes. I have paid the amount you are to pay every month for your board. Every morning I will send you a confidential man, who will see your companion and will bring me your orders. And I myself will come and see you at the grating as often as you please."

It was then my sad duty, which the laws of politeness enjoined, to thank the marquis for his trouble.

"'Tis to you, my lord," said I, "I entrust Rosalie. I am placing her, I am sure, in good hands. I will go on my way as soon as she is in the convent; I hope you will write a letter to the mother-superior for her to take."

"I will write it directly," said he.

And as Rosalie had told him before that she

would pay for everything herself, he gave her a written copy of the agreement he had made.

"I have resolved," said Rosalie to the marquis, "to go into the convent to-morrow, and I shall be very glad to have a short visit from you the day after."

"I will be there," said the marquis, "and you may be sure that I will do all in my power to make your stay agreeable."

The night was a sad one for both of us. Love scarcely made a pause amidst our alternate complaints and consolations. We swore to be faithful for ever, and our oaths were sincere, as ardent lovers' oaths always are. But they are as nought unless they are sealed by destiny, and that no mortal mind may know.

Rosalie, whose eyes were red and wet with tears, spent most of the morning in packing up with Véronique, who cried too. I could not look at her, as I felt angry with myself for thinking how pretty she was. Rosalie would only take two hundred sequins, telling me that if she wanted more she could easily let me know.

She told Véronique to look after me well for the two or three days I should spend at Genoa, made me a mute curtsy, and went out with Costa to get a sedan-chair. Two hours after, a servant of the marquis's came to fetch her belongings, and I was thus left alone and full of grief till the marquis came and

asked me to give him supper, advising that Véronique should be asked in to keep us company.

"That's a rare girl," said he, "you really don't know her, and you ought to know her better."

Although I was rather surprised, I did not stop to consider what the motives of the crafty Genoese might be, and I went and asked Véronique to come in. She replied politely that she would do so, adding that she knew how great an honour I did her.

I should have been the blindest of men if I had not seen that the clever marquis had succeeded in his well-laid plans, and that he had duped me as if I had been the merest freshman. Although I hoped with all my heart that I should get Rosalie back again, I had good reasons for suspecting that all the marquis's wit would be employed to seduce her, and I could not help thinking that he would succeed. Nevertheless, in the position I was in, I could only keep my fears to myself and let him do his utmost.

He was nearly sixty, a thorough disciple of Epicurus, a heavy player, rich, eloquent, a master of state-craft, highly popular at Genoa, and well acquainted with the hearts of men, and still more so with the hearts of women. He had spent a good deal of time at Venice to be more at liberty, and to enjoy the pleasures of life at his ease. He had never married, and when asked the reason would reply that he knew too well that women would be either tyrants or slaves, and that he did not want to be a tyrant to

any woman, nor to be under any woman's orders. He found some way of returning to his beloved Venice, in spite of the law forbidding any noble who has filled the office of doge to leave his native soil. Though he behaved to me in a very friendly manner he knew how to maintain an air of superiority which imposed on me. Nothing else could have given him the courage to ask me to dinner when Petri was to be present. I felt that I had been tricked, and I thought myself in duty bound to make him esteem me by my behaviour for the future. It was gratitude on his part which made him smooth the way to my conquest of Véronique, who doubtless struck him as a fit and proper person to console me for the loss of Rosalie.

I did not take any part in the conversation at supper, but the marquis drew out Véronique, and she shone. It was easy for me to see that she had more wit and knowledge of the world than Rosalie, but in my then state of mind this grieved rather than rejoiced me. M. de Grimaldi seemed sorry to see me melancholy, and forced me, as it were, to join in the conversation. As he was reproaching me in a friendly manner for my silence, Véronique said with a pleasing smile that I had good reason to be silent after the declaration of love I had made to her, and which she had received so ill. I was astonished at this, and said that I did not remember having ever made her such a declaration; but she made me laugh

in spite of myself, when she said that her name that day was Lindane.

"Ah, that's in a play," said I, "in real life the man who declares his love in words is a simpleton; 'tis with deeds the true lover shews his love."

"Very true, but your lady was frightened all the same."

"No, no, Véronique; she is very fond of you."

"I know she is; but I have seen her jealous of me."

"If so, she was quite wrong."

This dialogue, which pleased me little, fell sweetly on the marquis's ears; he told me that he was going to call on Rosalie next morning, and that if I liked to give him a supper, he would come and tell me about her in the evening. Of course I told him that he would be welcome.

After Véronique had lighted me to my room, she asked me to let my servants wait on me, as if she did so now that my lady was gone, people might talk about her.

"You are right," said I, "kindly send Le Due to me."

Next morning I had a letter from Geneva. It came from my Epicurean syndic, who had presented M. de Voltaire with my translation of his play, with an exceedingly polite letter from me, in which I begged his pardon for having taken the liberty of travestying his fine French prose in Italian. The

syndic told me plainly that M. de Voltaire had pronounced my translation to be a bad one.

My self-esteem was so wounded by this, and by his impoliteness in not answering my letter, with which he could certainly find no fault, whatever his criticism of my translation might be, that I became the sworn enemy of the great Voltaire. I have censured him in all the works I have published, thinking that in wronging him I was avenging myself, to such an extent did passion blind me. At the present time I feel that even if my works survive, these feeble stings of mine can hurt nobody but myself. Posterity will class me amongst the Zoiluses whose own impotence made them attack this great man to whom civilization and human happiness owe so much. The only crime that can truthfully be alleged against Voltaire is his attacks on religion. If he had been a true philosopher he would never have spoken on such matters, for, even if his attacks were based on truth, religion is necessary to morality, without which there can be no happiness.

CHAPTER V

I FALL IN LOVE WITH VÉRONIQUE—HER SISTER—
PLOT AGAINST PLOT — MY VICTORY — MUTUAL
DISAPPOINTMENT

I HAVE never liked eating by myself, and thus I have never turned hermit, though I once thought of turning monk; but a monk without renouncing all the pleasures of life lives well in a kind of holy idleness. This dislike to loneliness made me give orders that the table should be laid for two, and indeed, after supping with the marquis and myself, Véronique had some right to expect as much, to say nothing of those rights which her wit and beauty gave her.

I only saw Costa, and asked him what had become of Le Duc. He said he was ill. "Then go behind the lady's chair," said I. He obeyed, but smiled as he did so. Pride is a universal failing, and though a servant's pride is the silliest of all it is often pushed to the greatest extremes.

I thought Véronique prettier than before. Her behaviour, now free and now reserved, as the occasion demanded, shewed me that she was no

new hand, and that she could have played the part of a princess in the best société. Nevertheless (so strange a thing is the heart of man), I was sorry to find I liked her, and my only consolation was that her mother would come and take her away before the day was over. I had adored Rosalie, and my heart still bled at the thought of our parting.

The girl's mother came while we were still at table. She was astounded at the honour I shewed her daughter, and she overwhelmed me with thanks.

"You owe me no gratitude," said I to her; "your daughter is clever, good, and beautiful."

"Thank the gentleman for his compliment," said the mother, "for you are really stupid, wanton, and ugly;" and then she added, "But how could you have the face to sit at table with the gentleman in a dirty chemise?"

"I should blush, mother, if I thought you were right; but I put a clean one on only two hours ago."

"Madam," said I to the mother, "the chemise cannot look white beside your daughter's whiter skin."

This made the mother laugh, and pleased the girl immensely. When the mother told her that she was come to take her back, Véronique said, with a sly smile,—

"Perhaps the gentleman won't be pleased at my leaving him twenty-four hours before he goes away."

"On the contrary," said I, "I should be very vexed."

"Well, then, she can stay, sir," said the mother; "but for decency's sake I must send her younger sister to sleep with her."

"If you please," I rejoined. And with that I left them.

The thought of Véronique troubled me, as I knew I was taken with her, and what I had to dread was a calculated resistance.

The mother came into my room where I was writing, and wished me a pleasant journey, telling me for the second time that she was going to send her daughter Annette. The girl came in the evening, accompanied by a servant, and after lowering her *mezzaro*, and kissing my hand respectfully, she ran gaily to kiss her sister.

I wanted to see what she was like, and called for candles; and on their being brought I found she was a blonde of a kind I had never before seen. Her hair, eyebrows, and eyelashes were the colour of pale gold, fairer almost than her skin, which was extremely delicate. She was very short-sighted, but her large pale blue eyes were wonderfully beautiful. She had the smallest mouth imaginable, but her teeth, though regular, were not so

white as her skin. But for this defect Annette might have passed for a perfect beauty.

Her shortness of sight made too brilliant a light painful to her, but as she stood before me she seemed to like me looking at her. My gaze fed hungrily on the two little half-spheres, which were not yet ripe, but so white as to make me guess how ravishing the rest of her body must be. Véronique did not shew her breasts so freely. One could see that she was superbly shaped, but everything was carefully hidden from the gaze. She made her sister sit down beside her and work, but when I saw that she was obliged to hold the stuff close to her face I told her that she should spare her eyes, for that night at all events, and with that she obediently put the work down.

The marquis came as usual, and like myself he thought Annette, whom he had never seen before, an astonishing miniature beauty. Taking advantage of his age and high rank, the voluptuous old man dared to pass his hand over her breast, and she, who was too respectful to cross my lord, let him do it without making the slightest objection. She was a compound of innocence and coquetry.

The woman who shewing little succeeds in making a man want to see more, has accomplished three-fourths of the task of making him fall in love with her; for is love anything else than a kind of

curiosity? I think not; and what makes me certain is that when the curiosity is satisfied the love disappears. Love, however, is the strongest kind of curiosity in existence, and I was already curious about Annette.

M. Grimaldi told Véronique that Rosalie wished her to stay with me till I left Genoa, and she was as much astonished at this as I was.

"Be kind enough to tell her," said I to the marquis, "that Véronique has anticipated her wishes and has got her sister Annette to stay with her."

"Two are always better than one, my dear fellow," replied the crafty Genoese.

After these remarks we left the two sisters together and went into my room, where he said—

"Your Rosalie is contented, and you ought to congratulate yourself on having made her happy, as I am sure she will be. The only thing that vexes me is that you can't go and see her yourself with any decency."

"You are in love with her, my lord."

"I confess that I am, but I am an old man, and it vexes me."

"That's no matter, she will love you tenderly; and if Petri ever becomes her husband, I am sure she will never be anything more than a good friend to him. Write to me at Florence and tell me how she receives him."

"Stay here for another three days; the two beauties there will make the time seem short."

"It's exactly for that reason that I want to go to-morrow. I am afraid of Véronique."

"I shouldn't have thought that you would have allowed any woman to frighten you."

"I am afraid she has cast her fatal nets around me, and when the time comes she will be strictly moral. Rosalie is my only love."

"Well, here's a letter from her."

I went apart to read the letter, the sight of which made my heart beat violently; it ran as follows:

"Dearest,—I see you have placed me in the hands of one who will care for me like a father. This is a new kindness which I owe to the goodness of your heart. I will write to you at whatever address you send me. If you like Véronique, my darling, do not fear any jealousy from me; I should be wrong to entertain such a feeling in my present position. I expect that if you make much of her she will not be able to resist, and I shall be glad to hear that she is lessening your sadness. I hope you will write me a few lines before you go."

I went up to the marquis and told him to read it. He seemed greatly moved.

"Yes," said he, "the dear girl will find in me her friend and father, and if she marries my godson

and he does not treat her as he ought, he will not possess her long. I shall remember her in my will, and thus when I am dead my care will still continue. But what do you think of her advice as to Véronique? I don't expect she is exactly a vestal virgin, though I have never heard anything against her."

I had ordered that the table should be laid for four, so Annette sat down without our having to ask her. Le Duc appeared on the scene, and I told him that if he were ill he might go to bed.

"I am quite well," said he.

"I am glad to hear it; but don't trouble now, you shall wait on me when I am at Leghorn."

I saw that Véronique was delighted at my sending him away, and I resolved then and there to lay siege to her heart. I began by talking to her in a very meaning manner all supper-time, while the marquis entertained Annette. I asked him if he thought I could get a felucca next day to take me to Lerici.

"Yes," said he, "whenever you like and with as many oarsmen as you please; but I hope you will put off your departure for two or three days."

"No," I replied, ogling Véronique, "the delay might cost me too dear."

The sly puss answered with a smile that shewed she understood my meaning.

When we rose from the table I amused myself

with Annette, and the marquis with Véronique. After a quarter of an hour he came and said to me,—

“Certain persons have asked me to beg you to stay a few days longer, or at least to sup here to-morrow night.”

“Very good. We will talk of the few days more at supper to-morrow.”

“Victory!” said the marquis; and Véronique seemed very grateful to me for granting her request. When our guest was gone, I asked my new house-keeper if I might send Costa to bed.

“As my sister is with me, there can be no ground for any suspicion.”

“I am delighted that you consent; now I am going to talk to you.”

She proceeded to do my hair, but she gave no answer to my soft speeches. When I was on the point of getting into bed she wished me good night, and I tried to kiss her by way of return. She repulsed me and ran to the door, much to my surprise. She was going to leave the room, when I addressed her in a voice of grave politeness.

“I beg you will stay; I want to speak to you; come and sit by me. Why should you refuse me a pleasure which after all is a mere mark of friendship?”

“Because, things being as they are, we could not remain friends, neither could we be lovers.”

"Lovers! why not, we are perfectly free."

"I am not free; I am bound by certain prejudices which do not trouble you."

"I should have thought you were superior to prejudices."

"There are some prejudices which a woman ought to respect. The superiority you mention is a pitiful thing; always the dupe of itself. What would become of me, I should like to know, if I abandoned myself to the feelings I have for you?"

"I was waiting for you to say that, dear Véronique. What you feel for me is not love. If it were so, you would feel as I do, and you would soon break the bonds of prejudice."

"I confess that my head is not quite turned yet, but still I feel that I shall grieve at your departure."

"If so, that is no fault of mine. But tell me what I can do for you during my short stay here."

"Nothing; we do not know one another well enough."

"I understand you, but I would have you know that I do not intend to marry any woman who is not my friend."

"You mean you will not marry her till you have ceased to be her lover?"

"Exactly."

"You would like to finish where I would begin."

"You may be happy some day, but you play for high stakes."

"Well, well, it's a case of win all or lose all."

"That's as may be. But without further argument it seems to me that we could safely enjoy our love, and pass many happy moments undisturbed by prejudice."

"Possibly, but one gets burnt fingers at that game, and I shudder at the very thought of it. No, no; leave me alone, there is my sister who will wonder why I am in your arms."

"Very good; I see I was mistaken, and Rosalie too."

"Why what did she think about me?"

"She wrote and told me that she thought you would be kind."

"I hope she mayn't have to repent for having been too kind herself."

"Good bye, Véronique."

I felt vexed at having made the trial, for in these matters one always feels angry at failure. I decided I would leave her and her precepts, true or false, alone; but when I awoke in the morning and saw her coming to my bed with a pleasant smile on her face, I suddenly changed my mind. I had slept upon my anger and I was in love again. I thought she had repented, and that I should be

victorious when I attacked her again. I put on a smile myself and breakfasted gaily with her and her sister. I behaved in the same way at dinner; and the general high spirits which M. de Grimaldi found prevailing in the evening, made him think, doubtless, that we were getting on well, and he congratulated us. Véronique behaved exactly as if the marquis had guessed the truth, and I felt sure of having her after supper, and in the ecstasy of the thought I promised to stay for four days longer.

"Bravo, Véronique!" said the marquis, "that's the way. You are intended by nature to rule your lovers with an absolute sway."

I thought she would say something to diminish the marquis's certainty that there was an argreement between us, but she did nothing of the sort, seeming to enjoy her triumph which made her appear more beautiful than ever; whilst I looked at her with the submissive gaze of a captive who glories in his chain. I took her behaviour as an omen of my approaching conquest, and did not speak to M. de Grimaldi alone lest he might ask me questions which I should not care to answer. He told us before he went away that he was engaged on the morrow, and so could not come to see us till the day after.

As soon as we were alone Véronique said to me, "You see how I let people believe what they please; I had rather be thought kind, as you call it,

than ridiculous, as an honest girl is termed now-a-days. Is it not so?"

"No, dear Véronique, I will never call you ridiculous, but I shall think you hate me if you make me pass another night in torture. You have inflamed me."

"Oh, pray be quiet! For pity's sake leave me alone! I will not inflame you any more. Oh! Oh!"

I had enraged her by thrusting a daring hand into the very door of the sanctuary. She repulsed me and fled. Three or four minutes later her sister came to undress me. I told her gently to go to bed as I had to write for three or four hours; but not caring that she should come on a bootless errand I opened a box and gave her a watch. She took it modestly, saying,—

"This is for my sister, I suppose?"

"No, dear Annette, it's for you."

She gave a skip of delight, and I could not prevent her kissing my hand.

I proceeded to write Rosalie a letter of four pages. I felt worried and displeased with myself and everyone else. I tore up my letter without reading it over, and making an effort to calm myself I wrote her another letter more subdued than the first, in which I said nothing of Véronique, but informed my fair recluse that I was going on the day following.

I did not go to bed till very late, feeling out of temper with the world. I considered that I had failed in my duty to Véronique, whether she loved me or not, for I loved her and I was a man of honour. I had a bad night, and when I awoke it was noon, and on ringing Costa and Annette appeared. The absence of Véronique shewed how I had offended her. When Costa had left the room I asked Annette after her sister, and she said that she was working. I wrote her a note, in which I begged her pardon, promising that I would never offend her again, and begging her to forget everything and to be just the same as before. I was taking my coffee when she came into my room with an expression of mortification which grieved me excessively.

"Forget everything, I beg, and I will trouble you no more. Give me my buckles, as I am going for a country walk, and I shall not be in till supper-time. I shall doubtless get an excellent appetite, and as you have nothing more to fear you need not trouble to send me Annette again."

I dressed myself in haste, and left the town by the first road that came in my way, and I walked fast for two hours with the intention of tiring myself, and of thus readjusting the balance between mind and body. I have always found that severe exercise and fresh air are the best cure for any mental perturbation.

I had walked for more than three leagues when hunger and weariness made me stop at a village inn, where I had an omelette cooked. I ate it hungrily with brown bread and wine, which seemed to me delicious though it was rather sharp.

I felt too tired to walk back to Genoa, so I asked for a carriage; but there was no such thing to be had. The inn-keeper provided me with a sorry nag and a man to guide me. Darkness was coming on, and we had more than six miles to do. Fine rain began to fall when I started, and continued all the way, so that I got home by eight o'clock wet to the skin, shivering with cold, dead tired, and in a sore plight from the rough saddle, against which my satin breeches were no protection. Costa helped me to change my clothes, and as he went out Annette came in.

"Where is your sister?"

"She is in bed with a bad headache. She gave me a letter for you; here it is."

"I have been obliged to go to bed on account of a severe headache to which I am subject. I feel better already, and I shall be able to wait on you to-morrow. I tell you as much, because I do not wish you to think that my illness is feigned. I am sure that your repentance for having humiliated me is sincere, and I hope in your turn that you will forgive me or pity me, if my way of thinking prevents me from conforming to yours."

"Annette dear, go and ask your sister if she would like us to sup in her room."

She soon came back telling me that Véronique was obliged, but begged me to let her sleep.

I supped with Annette, and was glad to see that, though she only drank water, her appetite was better than mine. My passion for her sister prevented me thinking of her, but I felt that Annette would otherwise have taken my fancy. When we were taking dessert, I conceived the idea of making the girl drunk to get her to talk of her sister, so I gave her a glass of Lunel muscat.

"I only drink water, sir."

"Don't you like wine?"

"Yes, but as I am not used to it I am afraid of its getting into my head."

"Then you can go to bed; you will sleep all the better."

She drank the first glass, which she enjoyed immensely, then a second, and then a third. Her little brains were in some confusion when she had finished the third glass. I made her talk about her sister, and in perfect faith she told me all the good imaginable.

"Then you are very fond of Véronique?" said I.

"Oh, yes! I love her with all my heart, but she will not let me caress her."

"No doubt she is afraid of your ceasing to love

her. But do you think she ought to make me suffer so?"

"No, but if you love her you ought to forgive her."

Annette was still quite reasonable. I made her drink a fourth glass of muscat, but an instant after she told me that she could not see anything, and we rose from the table. Annette began to please me a little too much, but I determined not to make any attempts upon her for fear of finding her too submissive. A little resistance sharpens the appetite, while favours granted with too much ease lose a great deal of their charm. Annette was only fourteen, she had a soft heart, no knowledge of the world or her own rights, and she would not have resisted my embraces for fear of being rude. That sort of thing would only please a rich and voluptuous Turk.

I begged her to do my hair, intending to dismiss her directly after, but when she had finished I asked her to give me the ointment.

"What do you want it for?"

"For the blisters that cursed saddle on which I rode six miles gave me."

"Does the ointment do them good?"

"Certainly; it takes away the smart, and by to-morrow I shall be cured, but you must send Costa to me, as I cannot put it on myself."

"Can't I do it?"

"Yes, but I am afraid that would be an abuse of your kindness."

"I guess why; but as I am short-sighted, how shall I see the blisters?"

"If you want to do it for me, I will place myself so that it will be easier for you. Stay, put the candle on this table."

"There you are, but don't let Costa put it on again to-morrow, or he will guess that I or my sister did it to-night."

"You will do me the same service, then, to-morrow?"

"I or my sister, for she will get up early."

"Your sister! No, my dear; she would be afraid of giving me too much pleasure by touching me so near."

"And I am only afraid of hurting you. Is that right? Good heavens! what a state your skin is in!"

"You have not finished yet."

"I am so short-sighted; turn round."

"With pleasure. Here I am."

The little wanton could not resist laughing at what she saw, doubtless, for the first time. She was obliged to touch it to continue rubbing the ointment in, and I saw that she liked it, as she touched it when she had no need, and not being able to stand it any longer I took hold of her hand

and made her stop her work in favour of a pleasanter employment.

When she had finished I burst out laughing to hear her ask, in the most serious way, the pot of ointment still in her left hand,—

“Did I do it right!”

“Oh, admirably, dear Annette! You are an angel, and I am sure you know what pleasure you gave me. Can you come and spend an hour with me?”

“Wait a bit.”

She went out and shut the door, and I waited for her to return; but my patience being exhausted I opened the door slightly, and saw her undressing and getting into bed with her sister. I went back to my room and to bed again, without losing all hope. I was not disappointed, for in five minutes back she came, clad in her chemise and walking on tip-toe.

“Come to my arms, my love; it is very cold.”

“Here I am. My sister is asleep and suspects nothing; and even if she awoke the bed is so large that she would not notice my absence.”

“You are a divine creature, and I love you with all my heart.”

“So much the better. I give myself up to you; do what you like with me, on the condition that you think of my sister no more.”

"That will not cost me much. I promise that I will not think of her."

I found Annette a perfect neophyte, and though I saw no blood on the altar of love next morning I did not suspect her on that account. I have often seen such cases, and I know by experience that the effusion of blood or its absence proves nothing. As a general rule a girl cannot be convicted of having had a lover unless she be with child.

I spent two hours of delight with this pretty baby, for she was so small, so delicate, and so daintily shaped all over, that I can find no better name for her. Her docility did not detract from the piquancy of the pleasure, for she was voluptuously inclined.

When I rose in the morning she came to my room with Véronique, and I was glad to see that while the younger sister was radiant with happiness the elder looked pleasant and as if she desired to make herself agreeable. I asked her how she was, and she told me that diet and sleep had completely cured her. "I have always found them the best remedy for a headache." Annette had also cured me of the curiosity I had felt about her. I congratulated myself on my achievement.

I was in such high spirits at supper that M. de Grimaldi thought I had won everything from Véronique, and I let him think so. I promised to dine with him the next day, and I kept my word.

After dinner I gave him a long letter for Rosalie, whom I did not expect to see again except as Madame Petri, though I took care not to let the marquis know what I thought.

In the evening I supped with the two sisters, and I made myself equally agreeable to both of them. When Véronique was alone with me, putting my hair into curl-papers, she said that she loved me much more now that I behaved discreetly.

"My discretion," I replied, "only means that I have given up the hope of winning you. I know how to take my part."

"Your love was not very great, then?"

"It sprang up quickly, and you, Véronique, could have made it increase to a gigantic size."

She said nothing, but bit her lip, wished me good night and left the room. I went to bed expecting a visit from Annette, but I waited in vain. When I rang the next morning the dear girl appeared looking rather sad. I asked her the reason.

"Because my sister is ill, and spent the whole night in writing," said she.

Thus I learnt the reason of her not having paid me a visit.

"Do you know what she was writing about?"

"Oh, no! She does not tell me that kind of thing, but here is a letter for you."

I read through the long and well-composed

letter, but as it bore marks of craft and dissimulation it made me laugh. After several remarks of no consequence she said that she had repulsed me because she loved me so much and that she was afraid that if she satisfied my fancy she might lose me.

"I will be wholly yours," she added, "if you will give me the position which Rosalie enjoyed. I will travel in your company, but you must give me a document, which M. de Grimaldi will sign as a witness, in which you must engage to marry me in a year, and to give me a portion of fifty thousand francs; and if at the end of a year you do not wish to marry me, that sum to be at my absolute disposal."

She stipulated also that if she became a mother in the course of a year the child should be hers in the event of our separating. On these conditions she would become my mistress, and would have for me all possible love and kindness.

This proposal, cleverly conceived, but foolishly communicated to me, shewed me that Véronique had not the talent of duping others. I saw directly that M. de Grimaldi had nothing to do with it, and I felt sure that he would laugh when I told him the story.

Annette soon came back with the chocolate, and told me that her sister hoped I would answer her letter.

"Yes, dear," said I, "I will answer her when I get up."

I took my chocolate, put on my dressing-gown, and went to Véronique's room. I found her sitting up in bed in a negligent attire that might have attracted me if her letter had not deprived her of my good opinion. I sat on the bed, gave her back the letter, and said,—

"Why write, when we can talk the matter over?"

"Because one is often more at ease in writing than in speaking."

"In diplomacy and business that will pass, but not in love. Love makes no conditions. Let us have no documents, no safeguards, but give yourself up to me as Rosalie did, and begin to-night without my promising anything. If you trust in love, you will make him your prisoner. That way will honour us and our pleasures, and if you like I will consult M. de Grimaldi on the subject. As to your plan, if it does not injure your honour, it does small justice to your common sense, and no one but a fool would agree to it. You could not possibly love the man to whom you make such a proposal, and as to M. de Grimaldi, far from having anything to do with it, I am sure he would be indignant at the very idea."

This discourse did not put Véronique out of countenance. She said she did not love me well

enough to give herself to me unconditionally; to which I replied that I was not sufficiently taken with her charms to buy them at the price she fixed, and so I left her.

I called Costa, and told him to go and warn the master of the felucca that I was going the next day, and with this idea I went to bid good-bye to the marquis, who informed me that he had just been taking Petri to see Rosalie, who had received him well enough. I told him I was glad to hear it, and said that I commended to him the care of her happiness, but such commendations were thrown away.

It is one of the most curious circumstances of my history, that in one year two women whom I sincerely loved and whom I might have married were taken from me by two old men, whose affections I had fostered without wishing to do so. Happily these gentlemen made my mistresses' fortunes, but on the other hand they did me a still greater service in relieving me of a tie which I should have found very troublesome in course of time. No doubt they both saw that my fortune, though great in outward show, rested on no solid basis, which, as the reader will see, was unhappily too true. I should be happy if I thought that my errors or rather follies would serve as a warning to the readers of these Memoirs.

I spent the day in watching the care with

which Véronique and Annette packed up my trunks, for I would not let my two servants help in any way. Véronique was neither sad nor gay. She looked as if she had made up her mind, and as if there had never been any differences between us. I was very glad, for as I no longer cared for her I should have been annoyed to find that she still cared for me.

We supped in our usual manner, discussing only commonplace topics, but just as I was going to bed Annette shook my hand in a way that told me to prepare for a visit from her. I admired the natural acuteness of young girls, who take their degrees in the art of love with so much ease and at such an early age. Annette, almost a child, knew more than a young man of twenty. I decided on giving her fifty sequins without letting Véronique see me, as I did not intend to be so liberal towards her. I took a roll of ducats and gave them to her as soon as she came.

She lay down beside me, and after a moment devoted to love she said that Véronique was asleep, adding,—

“I heard all you said to my sister, and I am sure you love her.”

“If I did, dear Annette, I should not have made my proposal in such plain terms.”

“I should like to believe that, but what would

you have done if she had accepted your offer? You would be in one bed by this, I suppose?"

"I was more than certain, dearest, that her pride would hinder her receiving me."

We had reached this point in our conversation when we were surprised by the sudden appearance of Véronique with a lighted candle, and wearing only her chemise. She laughed at her sister to encourage her, and I joined in the laughter, keeping a firm hold on the little one for fear of her escaping. Véronique looked ravishing in her scanty attire, and as she laughed I could not be angry with her. However, I said,—

"You have interrupted our enjoyment, and hurt your sister's feelings; perhaps you will despise her for the future?"

"On the contrary, I shall always love her."

"Her feelings overcame her, and she surrendered to me without making any terms."

"She has more sense than I."

"Do you mean that?"

"I do, really."

"I am astonished and delighted to hear it; but as it is so, kiss your sister."

At this invitation Véronique put down the candle, and covered Annette's beautiful body with kisses. The scene made me feel very happy.

"Come, Véronique," said I, "you will die of cold; come and lie down."

I made room for her, and soon there were three of us under the same sheet. I was in an ecstasy at this group, worthy of Aretin's pencil.

"Dearest ones," said I, "you have played me a pretty trick; was it premeditated? And was Véronique false this morning, or is she false now?"

"We did not premeditate anything, I was true this morning, and I am true now. I feel that I and my plan were very silly, and I hope you will forgive me, since I have repented and have had my punishment. Now I think I am in my right senses, as I have yielded to the feelings with which you inspired me when I saw you first, and against which I have fought too long."

"What you say pleases me extremely."

"Well, forgive me and finish my punishment by shewing that you are not angry with me."

"How am I to do that?"

"By telling me that you are vexed no longer, and by continuing to give my sister proofs of your love."

"I swear to you that so far from being angry with you I am very fond of you; but would you like us to be fond in your presence?"

"Yes, if you don't mind me."

Feeling excited by voluptuous emotions, I saw that my part could no longer be a passive one.

"What do you say," said I to my blonde,

"will you allow your heroic sister to remain a mere looker-on at our sweet struggles? Are you not generous enough to let me make her an actress in the drama?"

"No; I confess I do not feel as if I could be so generous to-night, but next night, if you will play the same part, we will change. Véronique shall act and I will look on."

"That would do beautifully," said Véronique, with some vexation in her manner, "if the gentleman was not going to-morrow morning."

"I will stay, dear Véronique, if only to prove how much I love you,"

I could not have wished for plainer speech on her part, and I should have liked to shew her how grateful I felt on the spot; but that would have been at Annette's expense, as I had no right to make any alteration in the piece of which she was the author and had a right to expect all the profits. Whenever I recall this pleasant scene I feel my heart beat with voluptuous pleasure, and even now, with the hand of old age upon me, I cannot recall it without delight.

Véronique resigned herself to the passive part which her younger sister imposed on her, and turning aside she leant her head on her hand, disclosing a breast which would have excited the coldest of men, and bade me begin my attack on Annette. It was no hard task she laid upon me,

for I was all on fire, and I was certain of pleasing her as long as she looked at me. As Annette was short-sighted, she could not distinguish in the heat of the action which way I was looking, and I succeeded in getting my right hand free, without her noticing me, and I was thus enabled to communicate a pleasure as real though not as acute as that enjoyed by her sister. When the coverlet was disarranged, Véronique took the trouble to replace it, and thus offered me, as if by accident, a new spectacle. She saw how I enjoyed the sight of her charms, and her eye brightened. At last, full of unsatisfied desire, she shewed me all the treasures which nature had given her, just as I had finished with Annette for the fourth time. She might well think that I was only rehearsing for the following night, and her fancy must have painted her coming joys in the brightest colours. Such at all events were my thoughts, but the fates determined otherwise. I was in the middle of the seventh act, always slower and more pleasant for the actress than the first two or three, when Costa came knocking loudly at my door, calling out that the felucca was ready. I was vexed at this untoward incident, got up in a rage, and after telling him to pay the master for the day, as I was not going till the morrow, I went back to bed, no longer, however, in a state to continue the work I begun. My two sweethearts were delighted with me, but we all wanted rest, though the piece should not

have finished with an interruption. I wanted to get some amusement out of the interval, and proposed an ablution, which made Annette laugh, and which Véronique pronounced to be absolutely necessary. I found it a delicious *hors d'œuvre* to the banquet I had enjoyed. The two sisters rendered each other various services, standing in the most lascivious postures, and I found my situation as looker-on an enviable one.

When the washing and the laughter it gave rise to were over, we returned to the stage where the last act should have been performed. I longed to begin again, and I am sure I should have succeeded if I had been well backed up by my partner; but Annette, who was young and tired out with the toils of the night, forgot her part, and yielded to sleep as she had yielded to love. Véronique began to laugh when she saw her asleep, and I had to do the same, when I saw that she was as still as a corpse.

"What a pity!" said Véronique's eyes; but she said it with her eyes alone, while I was waiting for these words to issue from her lips. We were both of us wrong: she for not speaking, and I for waiting for her to speak. It was a favourable moment, but we let it pass by, and love punished us. I had, it is true, another reason for abstaining. I wished to reserve myself for the night. Véronique went to her own bed to quiet her excited feelings, and I stayed in bed with my sleeping beauty till noon,

when I wished her good morning by a fresh assault which was completed neither on her side nor on mine to the best of my belief.

The day was spent in talking about ourselves, and determined to eat only one meal we did not sit down to table till night began to fall. We spent two hours in the consumption of delicate dishes, and in defying Bacchus to make us feel his power. We rose as we saw Annette falling asleep, but we were not much annoyed at the thought that she would not see the pleasures we promised each other. I thought that I should have enough to do to contemplate the charms of the one nymph without looking at Annette's beauties. We went to bed, our arms interlaced, our bodies tight together, and lip pressed on lip, but that was all. Véronique saw what prevented me going any further, and she was too polite and modest to complain. She dissembled her feelings and continued to caress me, while I was in a frenzy of rage. I had never had such a misfortune, unless as the result of complete exhaustion, or from a strong mental impression capable of destroying my natural faculties. Let my readers imagine what I suffered; in the flower of my age, with a strong constitution, holding the body of a woman I had ardently desired in my arms, while she tenderly caressed me, and yet I could do nothing for her. I was in despair; one cannot offer a greater insult to a woman.

At last we had to accept the facts and speak rea-

sonably, and I was the first to bewail my misfortune.

"You tired yourself too much yesterday," said she, "and you were not sufficiently temperate at supper. Do not let it trouble you, dearest, I am sure you love me. Do not try to force nature, you will only weaken yourself more. I think a gentle sleep would restore your manly powers better than anything. I can't sleep myself, but don't mind me. Sleep, we will make love together afterwards."

After those excellent and reasonable suggestions, Véronique turned her back to me and I followed her example, but in vain did I endeavour to obtain a refreshing slumber; nature which would not give me the power of making her, the loveliest creature, happy, envied me the power of repose as well. My amorous ardour and my rage forbade all thoughts of rest, and my excited passions conspired against that which would enable them to satisfy their desires. Nature punished me for having distrusted her, and because I had taken stimulants fit only for the weak. If I had fasted, I should have done great things, but now there was a conflict between the stimulants and nature, and by my desire for enjoyment I had deprived myself of the power to enjoy. Thus nature, wise like its Divine Author, punishes the ignorance and presumption of poor weak mortals.

Throughout this terrible and sleepless night my

mind roamed abroad, and amidst the reproaches with which I overwhelmed myself I found a certain satisfaction in the thought that they were not wholly undeserved. This is the sole enjoyment I still have when I meditate on my past life and its varied adventures. I feel that no misfortune has befallen me save by my own fault, whilst I attribute to natural causes the blessings, of which I have enjoyed many. I think I should go mad if in my soliloquies I came across any misfortune which I could not trace to my own fault, for I should not know where to place the reason, and that would degrade me to the rank of creatures governed by instinct alone. I feel that I am somewhat more than a beast. A beast, in truth, is a foolish neighbour of mine, who tries to argue that the brutes reason better than we do.

"I will grant," I said, "that they reason better than you, but I can go no farther; and I think every reasonable man would say as much."

This reply has made me an enemy, although he admits the first part of the thesis.

Happier than I, Véronique slept for three hours; but she was disagreeably surprised on my telling her that I had not been able to close an eye, and on finding me in the same state of impotence as before. She began to get angry when I tried to convince her rather too forcibly that my misfortune was not due to my want of will, and then she blamed herself as the cause of my impotence; and mortified

by the idea, she endeavoured to destroy the spell by all the means which passion suggested, and which I had hitherto thought infallible; but her efforts and mine were all thrown away. My despair was as great as hers when at last, wearied, ashamed, and degraded in her own eyes, she discontinued her efforts, her eyes full of tears. She went away without a word, and left me alone for the two or three hours which had still to elapse before the dawn appeared.

At day-break Costa came and told me that the sea being rough and a contrary wind blowing, the felucca would be in danger of perishing.

"We will go as soon as the weather improves," said I; "in the mean time light me a fire."

I arose, and proceeded to write down the sad history of the night. This occupation soothed me, and feeling inclined to sleep I lay down again and slept for eight hours. When I awoke I felt better, but still rather sad. The two sisters were delighted to see me in good health, but I thought I saw on Véronique's features an unpleasant expression of contempt. However, I had deserved it, and I did not take the trouble of changing her opinion, though if she had been more caressing she might easily have put me in a state to repair the involuntary wrongs I had done her in the night. Before we sat down to table I gave her a present of a hundred sequins, which made her look a little more cheerful. I gave an equal present to my dear Annette, who had

not expected anything, thinking herself amply recompensed by my first gift and by the pleasure I had afforded her.

At midnight the master of the felucca came to tell me that the wind had changed, and I took leave of the sisters. Véronique shed tears, but I knew to what to attribute them. Annette kissed me affectionately; thus each played her own part. I sailed for Lerici, where I arrived the next day, and then posted to Leghorn. Before I speak of this town I think I shall interest my readers by narrating a circumstance not unworthy of these Memoirs.

CHAPTER VI

A CLEVER CHEAT—PASSANO—PISA—CORILLA—MY
OPINION OF SQUINTING EYES—FLORENCE—I SEE
THÉRÈSE AGAIN—MY SON—CORTICELLI

I WAS standing at some distance from my carriage into which they were putting four horses, when a man accosted me and asked me if I would pay in advance or at the next stage. Without troubling to look at him I said I would pay in advance, and gave him a coin requesting him to bring me the change.

"Directly, sir," said he, and with that he went into the inn.

A few minutes after, just as I was going to look after my change, the post-master came up and asked me to pay for the stage.

"I have paid already, and I am waiting for my change. Did I not give the money to you?"

"Certainly not, sir."

"Whom did I give it to, then?"

"I really can't say; but you will be able to recognize the man, doubtless."

"It must have been you or one of your people."

I was speaking loud, and all the men came about me.

"These are all the men in my employ," said the master, and he asked if any of them had received the money from me.

They all denied the fact with an air of sincerity which left no room for suspicion. I cursed and swore, but they let me curse and swear as much as I liked. At last I discovered that there was no help for it, and I paid a second time, laughing at the clever rascal who had taken me in so thoroughly. Such are the lessons of life; always full of new experiences, and yet one never knows enough. From that day I have always taken care not to pay for posting except to the proper persons.

In no country are knaves so cunning as in Italy, Greece ancient and modern excepted.

When I got to the best inn at Leghorn they told me that there was a theatre, and my luck made me go and see the play. I was recognized by an actor who accosted me, and introduced me to one of his comrades, a self-styled poet, and a great enemy of the Abbé Chiari, whom I did not like, as he had written a biting satire against me, and I had never succeeded in avenging myself on him. I asked them to come and sup with me—a windfall which these people are not given to refusing. The pretended poet was a Genoese, and called himself Giacomo Passano. He informed me that he had written three hundred

sonnets against the abbé, who would burst with rage if they were ever printed. As I could not restrain a smile at the good opinion the poet had of his works, he offered to read me a few sonnets. He had the manuscript about him, and I could not escape the penance. He read a dozen or so, which I thought mediocre, and a mediocre sonnet is necessarily a bad sonnet, as this form of poetry demands sublimity; and thus amongst the myriads of sonnets to which Italy gives birth very few can be called good.

If I had given myself time to examine the man's features, I should, no doubt, have found him to be a rogue; but I was blinded by passion, and the idea of three hundred sonnets against the Abbé Chiari fascinated me.

I cast my eyes over the title of the manuscript, and read, "*La Chiareide di Ascanio Pogomas.*"

"That's an anagram of my Christian name and my surname; is it not a happy combination?"

This folly made me smile again. Each of the sonnets was a dull diatribe ending with "*l'abbate Chiari è un coglione.*" He did not prove that he was one, but he said so over and over again, making use of the poet's privilege to exaggerate and lie. What he wanted to do was to annoy the abbé, who was by no means what Passano called him, but on the contrary, a wit and a poet; and if he had been acquainted with the requirements of the stage he would have

written better plays than Goldoni, as he had a greater command of language.

I told Passano, for civility's sake, that he ought to get his *Chiareide* printed.

"I would do so," said he, "if I could find a publisher, for I am not rich enough to pay the expenses, and the publishers are a pack of ignorant beggars. Besides, the press is not free, and the censor would not let the epithet I give to my hero pass. If I could go to Switzerland I am sure it could be managed; but I must have six sequins to walk to Switzerland, and I have not got them."

"And when you got to Switzerland, where there are no theatres, what would you do for a living?"

"I would paint in miniature. Look at those."

He gave me a number of small ivory tablets, representing obscene subjects, badly drawn and badly painted.

"I will give you an introduction to a gentleman at Berne," I said; and after supper I gave him a letter and six sequins. He wanted to force some of his productions on me, but I would not have them. I was foolish enough to give him a letter to pretty Sara's father, and I told him to write to me at Rome, under cover of the banker Belloni.

I set out from Leghorn the next day and went to Pisa, where I stopped two days. There I made the acquaintance of an Englishman, of whom I bought a travelling carriage. He took me to see

Corilla, the celebrated poetess. She received me with great politeness, and was kind enough to improvise on several subjects which I suggested. I was enchanted, not so much with her grace and beauty, as by her wit and perfect elocution. How sweet a language sounds when it is spoken well and the expressions are well chosen. A language badly spoken is intolerable even from a pretty mouth, and I have always admired the wisdom of the Greeks who made their nurses teach the children from the cradle to speak correctly and pleasantly. We are far from following their good example; witness the fearful accents one hears in what is called, often incorrectly, good society.

Corilla was *straba*, like Venus as painted by the ancients—why, I cannot think, for however fair a squint-eyed woman may be otherwise, I always look upon her face as distorted. I am sure that if Venus had been in truth a goddess, she would have made the eccentric Greek, who first dared to paint her cross-eyed, feel the weight of her anger. I was told that when Corilla sang, she had only to fix her squinting eyes on a man and the conquest was complete; but, praised be God! she did not fix them on me.

At Florence I lodged at the “Hotel Carrajo,” kept by Dr. Vannini, who delighted to confess himself an unworthy member of the Academy Della Crusca. I took a suite of rooms which looked out

on the bank of the Arno. I also took a carriage and a footman, whom, as well as a coachman, I clad in blue and red livery. This was M. de Bragadin's livery, and I thought I might use his colours, not with the intention of deceiving anyone, but merely to cut a dash.

The morning after my arrival I put on my great coat to escape observation, and proceeded to walk about Florence. In the evening I went to the theatre to see the famous harlequin, Rossi, but I considered his reputation was greater than he deserved. I passed the same judgment on the boasted Florentine elocution; I did not care for it at all. I enjoyed seeing Pertici; having become old, and not being able to sing any more, he acted, and, strange to say, acted well; for, as a rule, all singers, men and women, trust to their voice and care nothing for acting, so that an ordinary cold entirely disables them for the time being.

Next day I called on the banker, Sasso Sassi, on whom I had a good letter of credit, and after an excellent dinner I dressed and went to the opera *in via della Pergola*, taking a stage box, not so much for the music, of which I was never much of an admirer, as because I wanted to look at the actress.

The reader may guess my delight and surprise when I recognised in the prima donna Thérèse, the false Bellino, whom I had left at Rimini in the year 1744; that charming Thérèse whom I should cer-

tainly have married if M. de Gages had not put me under arrest. I had not seen her for seventeen years, but she looked as beautiful and ravishing as ever as she came forward on the stage. It seemed impossible. I could not believe my eyes, thinking the resemblance must be a coincidence, when, after singing an air, she fixed her eyes on mine and kept them there. I could no longer doubt that it was she; she plainly recognized me. As she left the stage she stopped at the wings and made a sign to me with her fan to come and speak to her.

I went out with a beating heart, though I could not explain my perturbation, for I did not feel guilty in any way towards Thérèse, save in that I had not answered the last letter she had written me from Naples, thirteen years ago. I went round the theatre, feeling a greater curiosity as to the results of our interview than to know what had befallen her during the seventeen years which seemed an age to me.

I came to the stage-door, and I saw Thérèse standing at the top of the stair. She told the door-keeper to let me pass; I went up and we stood face to face. Dumb with surprise I took her hand and pressed it against my heart.

"Know from that beating heart," said I, "all that I feel."

"I can't follow your example," said she, "but when I saw you I thought I should have fainted. Unfortunately I am engaged to supper. I shall not

shut my eyes all night. I shall expect you at eight o'clock to-morrow morning. Where are you staying?"

"At Dr. Vannini's."

"Under what name?"

"My own."

"How long have you been here?"

"Since yesterday."

"Are you stopping long in Florence?"

"As long as you like."

"Are you married?"

"No."

"Cursed be that supper! What an event! You must leave me now, I have to go on. Good-bye till seven o'clock to-morrow."

She had said eight at first, but an hour sooner was no harm. I returned to the theatre, and recollected that I had neither asked her name or address, but I could find out all that easily. She was playing *Mandane*, and her singing and acting were admirable. I asked a well-dressed young man beside me what that admirable actress's name was.

"You have only come to Florence to-day, sir?"

"I arrived yesterday."

"Ah! well, then it's excusable. That actress has the same name as I have. She is my wife, and I am *Cirillo Palesi*, at your service."

I bowed and was silent with surprise. I dared not ask where she lived, lest he might think my curiosity impertinent. *Thérèse* married to this hand-

some young man, of whom, of all others, I had made enquiries about her! It was like a scene in a play.

I could bear it no longer. I longed to be alone and to ponder over this strange adventure at my ease, and to think about my visit to Thérèse at seven o'clock the next morning. I felt the most intense curiosity to see what the husband would do when he recognized me, and he was certain to do so, for he had looked at me attentively as he spoke. I felt that my old flame for Thérèse was rekindled in my heart, and I did not know whether I was glad or sorry at her being married.

I left the opera-house and told my footman to call my carriage.

"You can't have it till nine o'clock, sir; it was so cold the coachman sent the horses back to the stable."

"We will return on foot, then."

"You will catch a cold."

"What is the prima donna's name?"

"When she came here, she called herself Lanti, but for the last two months she has been Madame Palesi. She married a handsome young man with no property and no profession, but she is rich, so he takes his ease and does nothing."

"Where does she live?"

"At the end of this street. There's her house, sir; she lodges on the first floor."

This was all I wanted to know, so I said no

more, but took note of the various turnings, that I might be able to find my way alone the next day. I ate a light supper, and told Le Duc to call me at six o'clock.

"But it is not light till seven."

"I know that."

"Very good."

At the dawn of day, I was at the door of the woman I had loved so passionately. I went to the first floor, rang the bell, and an old woman came out and asked me if I were M. Casanova. I told her that I was, whereupon she said that the lady had informed her I was not coming till eight.

"She said seven."

"Well, well, it's of no consequence. Kindly walk in here. I will go and awake her."

In five minutes, the young husband in his night-cap and dressing-gown came in, and said that his wife would not be long. Then looking at me attentively with an astounded stare, he said,—

"Are you not the gentleman who asked me my wife's name last night?"

"You are right, I did. I have not seen your wife for many years, but I thought I recognized her. My good fortune made me enquire of her husband, and the friendship which formerly attached me to her will henceforth attach me to you."

As I uttered this pretty compliment Thérèse, as fair as love, rushed into the room with open

arms. I took her to my bosom in a transport of delight, and thus we remained for two minutes, two friends, two lovers, happy to see one another after a long and sad parting. We kissed each other again and again, and then bidding her husband sit down she drew me to a couch and gave full course to her tears. I wept too, and my tears were happy ones. At last we wiped our eyes, and glanced towards the husband whom we had completely forgotten. He stood in an attitude of complete astonishment, and we burst out laughing. There was something so comic in his surprise that it would have taxed all the talents of the poet and the caricaturist to depict his expression of amazement. Thérèse, who knew how to manage him, cried in a pathetic and affectionate voice,——

“My dear Palesi, you see before you my father—nay, more than a father, for this is my generous friend to whom I owe all. Oh, happy moment! for which my heart has longed for these ten years past.”

At the word “father” the unhappy husband fixed his gaze on me, but I restrained my laughter with considerable difficulty. Although Thérèse was young for her age, she was only two years younger than I; but friendship gives a new meaning to the sweet name of father.

“Yes, sir,” said I, “your Thérèse is my daughter, my sister, my cherished friend; she is an angel, and this treasure is your wife.”

"I did not reply to your last letter," said I, not giving him time to come to himself.

"I know all," she replied. "You fell in love with a nun. You were imprisoned under the Leads, and I heard of your almost miraculous flight at Vienna. I had a false presentiment that I should see you in that town. Afterwards I heard of you in Paris and Holland, but after you left Paris nobody could tell me any more about you. You will hear some fine tales when I tell you all that has happened to me during the past ten years. Now I am happy. I have my dear Palesi here, who comes from Rome. I married him a couple of months ago. We are very fond of each other, and I hope you will be as much his friend as mine."

At this I arose and embraced the husband, who cut such an extraordinary figure. He met me with open arms, but in some confusion; he was, no doubt, not yet quite satisfied as to the individual who was his wife's father, brother, friend, and perhaps lover, all at once. Thérèse saw this feeling in his eyes, and after I had done she came and kissed him most affectionately, which confused me in my turn, for I felt all my old love for her renewed, and as ardent as it was when Don Sancio Pico introduced me to her at Ancona.

Reassured by my embrace and his wife's caress, M. Palesi asked me if I would take a cup of chocolate with them, which he himself would make. I

answered that chocolate was my favourite breakfast-dish, and all the more so when it was made by a friend. He went away to see to it. Our time had come.

As soon as we were alone Thérèse threw herself into my arms, her face shining with such love as no pen can describe.

“Oh, my love! whom I shall love all my life, clasp me to your breast! Let us give each other a hundred embraces on this happy day, but not again, since my fate has made me another’s bride. Tomorrow we will be like brother and sister; to-day let us be lovers.”

She had not finished this speech before my bliss was crowned. Our transports were mutual, and we renewed them again and again during the half hour in which we had no fear of an interruption. Her negligent morning dress and my great coat were highly convenient under the circumstances.

After we had satiated in part our amorous ardour we breathed again and sat down. There was a short pause, and then she said,——

“You must know that I am in love with my husband and determined not to deceive him. What I have just done was a debt I had to pay to the remembrance of my first love. I had to pay it to prove how much I love you; but let us forget it now. You must be contented with the thought of my great affection for you—of which you can have no doubt—

and let me still think that you love me; but henceforth do not let us be alone together, as I should give way, and that would vex me. What makes you look so sad?"

"I find you bound, while I am free. I thought we had met never to part again; you had kindled the old fires. I am the same to you as I was at Ancona. I have proved as much, and you can guess how sad I feel at your decree that I am to enjoy you no more. I find that you are not only married but in love with your husband. Alas! I have come too late, but if I had not stayed at Genoa I should not have been more fortunate. You shall know all in due time, and in the meanwhile I will be guided by you in everything. I suppose your husband knows nothing of our connection, and my best plan will be to be reserved, will it not?"

"Yes, dearest, for he knows nothing of my affairs, and I am glad to say he shews no curiosity respecting them. Like everybody else, he knows I made my fortune at Naples; I told him I went there when I was ten years old. That was an innocent lie which hurts nobody; and in my position I find that inconvenient truths have to give way to lies. I give myself out as only twenty-four, how do you think I look?"

"You look as if you were telling the truth, though I know you must be thirty-two."

"You mean thirty-one, for when I knew you I couldn't have been more than fourteen."

"I thought you were fifteen at least."

"Well, I might admit that between ourselves; but tell me if I look more than twenty-four."

"I swear to you you don't look as old, but at Naples. . . ."

"At Naples some people might be able to contradict me, but nobody would mind them. But I am waiting for what ought to be the sweetest moment of your life."

"What is that, pray?"

"Allow me to keep my own counsel, I want to enjoy your surprise. How are you off? If you want money, I can give you back all you gave me, and with compound interest. All I have belongs to me; my husband is not master of anything. I have fifty thousand ducats at Naples, and an equal sum in diamonds. Tell me how much you want—quick! the chocolate is coming."

Such a woman was Thérèse. I was deeply moved, and was about to throw my arms about her neck without answering when the chocolate came. Her husband was followed by a girl of exquisite beauty, who carried three cups of chocolate on a silver-gilt dish. While we drank it Palesi amused us by telling us with much humour how surprised he was when he recognized the man who made him rise at such an early hour as the same who had

asked him his wife's name the night before. Thérèse and I laughed till our sides ached, the story was told so wittily and pleasantly. This Roman displeased me less than I expected; his jealousy seemed only put on for form's sake.

"At ten o'clock," said Thérèse, "I have a rehearsal here of the new opera. You can stay and listen if you like. I hope you will dine with us every day, and it will give me great pleasure if you will look upon my house as yours."

"To-day," said I, "I will stay with you till after supper, and then I will leave you with your fortunate husband."

As I pronounced these words M. Palesi embraced me with effusion, as if to thank me for not objecting to his enjoying his rights as a husband.

He was between the ages of twenty and twenty-two, of a fair complexion, and well-made, but too pretty for a man. I did not wonder at Thérèse being in love with him, for I knew too well the power of a handsome face; but I thought that she had made a mistake in marrying him, for a husband acquires certain rights which may become troublesome.

Thérèse's pretty maid came to tell me that my carriage was at the door.

"Will you allow me," said I to her, "to have my footman in?"

"Rascal," said I, as soon as he came in, "who told you to come here with my carriage?"

"Nobody, sir, but I know my duty."

"Who told you that I was here?"

"I guessed as much."

"Go and fetch Le Duc, and come back with him."

When they arrived I told Le Duc to pay the impertinent fellow three days' wages, to strip him of his livery, and to ask Dr. Vannini to get me a servant of the same build, not gifted with the faculty of divination, but who knew how to obey his master's orders. The rascal was much perturbed at the result of his officiousness, and asked Thérèse to plead for him; but, like a sensible woman, she told him that his master was the best judge of the value of his services.

At ten o'clock all the actors and actresses arrived, bringing with them a mob of amateurs who crowded the hall. Thérèse received their greetings graciously, and I could see she enjoyed a great reputation. The rehearsal lasted three hours, and wearied me extremely. To relieve my boredom I talked to Palesi, whom I liked for not asking me any particulars of my acquaintance with his wife. I saw that he knew how to behave in the position in which he was placed.

A girl from Parma, named Redegonde, who played a man's part and sang very well, stayed to dinner. Thérèse had also asked a young Bolognese, named Corticelli. I was struck with the budding

charms of this pretty dancer, but as I was just then full of Thérèse, I did not pay much attention to her. Soon after we sat down I saw a plump abbé coming in with measured steps. He looked to me a regular Tartuffe, after nothing but Thérèse. He came up to her as soon as he saw her, and going on one knee in the Portuguese fashion, kissed her hand tenderly and respectfully. Thérèse received him with smiling courtesy and put him at her right hand, I was at her left. His voice, manner, and all about him told me that I had known him, and in fact I soon recognized him as the Abbé Gama, whom I had left at Rome seventeen years before with Cardinal Acquaviva; but I pretended not to recognize him, and indeed he had aged greatly. This gallant priest had eyes for no one but Thérèse, and he was too busy with saying a thousand soft nothings to her to take notice of anybody else in the company. I hoped that in his turn he would either not recognize me or pretend not to do so, so I was continuing my trifling talk with the Corticelli, when Thérèse told me that the abbé wanted to know whether I did not recollect him. I looked at his face attentively, and with the air of a man who is trying to recollect something, and then I rose and asked if he were not the Abbé Gama, with whose acquaintance I was honoured.

"The same," said he, rising, and placing his arms round my neck he kissed me again and again. This was in perfect agreement with his crafty char-

acter; the reader will not have forgotten the portrait of him contained in the first volume of these Memoirs.

After the ice had been thus broken it will be imagined that we had a long conversation. He spoke of Barbaruccia, of the fair Marchioness G——, of Cardinal S—— C——, and told me how he had passed from the Spanish to the Portuguese service, in which he still continued. I was enjoying his talk about numerous subjects which had interested me in my early youth, when an unexpected sight absorbed all my thinking faculties. A young man of fifteen or sixteen, as well grown as Italians usually are at that age, came into the room, saluted the company with easy grace, and kissed Thérèse. I was the only person who did not know him, but I was not the only one who looked surprised. The daring Thérèse introduced him to me with perfect coolness with the words:

“That is my brother.”

I greeted him as warmly as I could, but my manner was slightly confused, as I had not had time to recover my composure. This so-called brother of Thérèse was my living image, though his complexion was rather clearer than mine. I saw at once that he was my son; nature had never been so indiscreet as in the amazing likeness between us. This, then, was the surprise of which Thérèse had spoken; she had devised the pleasure of seeing me at once astounded

and delighted, for she knew that my heart would be touched at the thought of having left her such a pledge of our mutual love. I had not the slightest foreknowledge in the matter, for Thérèse had never alluded to her being with child in her letters. I thought, however, that she should not have brought about this meeting in the presence of a third party, for everyone has eyes in their head, and anyone with eyes must have seen that the young man was either my son or my brother. I glanced at her, but she avoided meeting my eye, while the pretended brother was looking at me so attentively that he did not hear what was said to him. As to the others, they did nothing but look first at me and then at him, and if they came to the conclusion that he was my son they would be obliged to suppose that I had been the lover of Thérèse's mother, if she were really his sister, for taking into consideration the age she looked and gave herself out to be she could not possibly be his mother. It was equally impossible that I could be Thérèse's father, as I did not look any older than she did.

My son spoke the Neapolitan dialect perfectly, but he also spoke Italian very well, and in whatever he said I was glad to recognize taste, good sense, and intelligence. He was well-informed, though he had been brought up at Naples, and his manners were very distinguished. His mother made him sit between us at table.

"His favourite amusement," she said to me, "is music. You must hear him on the clavier, and though I am eight years older I shall not be surprised if you pronounce him the better performer."

Only a woman's delicate instinct could have suggested this remark; men hardly ever approach women in this respect.

Whether from natural impulses or self-esteem, I rose from the table so delighted with my son that I embraced him with the utmost tenderness, and was applauded by the company. I asked everybody to dine with me the next day, and my invitation was joyfully accepted; but the Corticelli said, with the utmost simplicity,——

"May I come, too?"

"Certainly; you too."

After dinner the Abbé Gama asked me to breakfast with him, or to have him to breakfast the next morning, as he was longing for a good talk with me.

"Come and breakfast with me," said I, "I shall be delighted to see you."

When the guests had gone Don Cesarino, as the pretended brother of Thérèse was called, asked me if I would walk with him. I kissed him, and replied that my carriage was at his service, and that he and his brother-in-law could drive in it, but that I had resolved not leave his sister that day. Palesi seemed quite satisfied with the arrangement, and they both went away.

When we were alone, I gave Thérèse an ardent embrace, and congratulated her on having such a brother.

“My dear, he is the fruit of our amours; he is your son. He makes me happy, and is happy himself, and indeed he has everything to make him so.”

“And I, too, am happy, dear Thérèse. You must have seen that I recognized him at once.”

“But do you want to give him a brother? How ardent you are!”

“Remember, beloved one, that to-morrow we are to be friends, and nothing more.”

By this my efforts were crowned with success, but the thought that it was for the last time was a better drop in the cup of happiness.

When we had regained our composure, Thérèse said,——

“The duke who took me from Rimini brought up our child; as soon as I knew that I was pregnant I confided my secret to him. No one knew of my delivery, and the child was sent to nurse at Sorrento, and the duke had him baptized under the name of Cæsar Philip Lanti. He remained at Sorrento till he was nine, and then he was boarded with a worthy man, who superintended his education and taught him music. From his earliest childhood he has known me as his sister, and you cannot think how happy I was when I saw him growing so like you. I have always considered him as a sure pledge of our

final union. I was ever thinking what would happen when we met, for I knew that he would have the same influence over you as he has over me. I was sure you would marry me and make him legitimate."

"And you have rendered all this, which would have made me happy, an impossibility."

"The fates decided so; we will say no more about it. On the death of the duke I left Naples, leaving Cesarino at the same boarding school, under the protection of the Prince de la Riccia, who has always looked upon him as a brother. Your son, though he does not know it, possesses the sum of twenty thousand ducats, of which I receive the interest, but you may imagine that I let him want for nothing. My only regret is that I cannot tell him I am his mother, as I think he would love me still more if he knew that he owed his being to me. You cannot think how glad I was to see your surprise to-day, and how soon you got to love him."

"He is wonderfully like me."

"That delights me. People must think that you were my mother's lover. My husband thinks that our friendship is due to the connection between you and my mother. He told me yesterday that Cesarino might be my brother on the mother's side, but not on my father's; as he had seen his father in the theatre, but that he could not possibly be my father, too. If I have children by Palesi all I have will go to them, but if not Cesarino will be my heir. My

property is well secured, even if the Prince de Riccia were to die."

"Come," said she, drawing me in the direction of her bed-room.

She opened a large box which contained her jewels and diamonds, and shares to the amount of fifty thousand ducats. Besides that she had a large amount of plate, and her talents which assured her the first place in all the Italian theatres.

"Do you know whether our dear Cesarino has been in love yet?" said I.

"I don't think so, but I fancy my pretty maid is in love with him. I shall keep my eyes open."

"You mustn't be too strict."

"No, but it isn't a good thing for a young man to engage too soon in that pleasure which makes one neglect everything else."

"Let me have him, I will teach him how to live."

"Ask all, but leave me my son. You must know that I never kiss him for fear of my giving way to excessive emotion. I wish you knew how good and pure he is, and how well he loves me; I could not refuse him anything. What will people say in Venice when they see Casanova again, who escaped from The Leads and has become twenty years younger?"

"You are going to Venice, then, for the *Ascensa*?"

"Yes, and you are going to Rome?"

"And to Naples, to see my friend the Duke de Matalone."

"I know him well. He has already had a son by the daughter of the Duke de Bovino, whom he married. She must be a charming woman to have made a man of him, for all Naples knew that he was impotent."

"Probably, she only knew the secret of making him a father."

"Well, it is possible."

We spent the time by talking with interest on various topics till Cesarino and the husband came back. The dear child finished his conquest of me at supper; he had a merry random wit, and all the Neapolitan vivacity. He sat down at the clavier, and after playing several pieces with the utmost skill he began to sing Neapolitan songs which made us all laugh. Thérèse only looked at him and me, but now and again she embraced her husband, saying, that in love alone lies happiness.

I thought then, and I think now, that this day was one of the happiest I have ever spent.

CHAPTER VII

THE CORTICELLI—THE JEW MANAGER BEATEN—THE
FALSE CHARLES IVANOFF AND THE TRICK HE
PLAYED ME—I AM ORDERED TO LEAVE TUSCANY—I
ARRIVE AT ROME—MY BROTHER JEAN

AT nine o'clock the next morning, the Abbé Gama was announced. The first thing he did was to shed tears of joy (as he said) at seeing me so well and prosperous after so many years. The reader will guess that the abbé addressed me in the most flattering terms, and perhaps he may know that one may be clever, experienced in the ways of the world, and even distrustful of flattery, but yet one's self-love, ever on the watch, listens to the flatterer, and thinks him pleasant. This polite and pleasant abbé, who had become extremely crafty from having lived all his days amongst the high dignitaries at the court of the *Servus Servorum Dei* (the best school of strategy), was not altogether an ill-disposed man, but both his disposition and his profession conspired to make him inquisitive; in fine, such as I have depicted him in the first volume of these Memoirs. He wanted to hear my adventures, and did not wait for

me to ask him to tell his story. He told me at great length the various incidents in his life for the seventeen years in which we had not seen one another. He had left the service of the King of Spain for that of the King of Portugal, he was secretary of embassy to the Commander Almada, and he had been obliged to leave Rome because the Pope Rezzonico would not allow the King of Portugal to punish certain worthy Jesuit assassins, who had only broken his arm as it happened, but who had none the less meant to take his life. Thus, Gama was staying in Italy corresponding with Almada and the famous Carvalho, waiting for the dispute to be finished before he returned to Rome. In point of fact this was the only substantial incident in the abbé's story, but he worked in so many episodes of no consequence that it lasted for an hour. No doubt he wished me to shew my gratitude by telling him all my adventures without reserve; but the upshot of it was that we both shewed ourselves true diplomatists, he in lengthening his story, I in shortening mine, while I could not help feeling some enjoyment in bulking the curiosity of my cassocked friend.

"What are you going to do in Rome?" said he, indifferently.

"I am going to beg the Pope to use his influence in my favour with the State Inquisitors at Venice."

It was not the truth, but one lie is as good as another, and if I had said I was only going for

amusement's sake he would not have believed me. To tell the truth to an unbelieving man is to prostitute, to murder it. He then begged me to enter into a correspondence with him, and as that bound me to nothing I agreed to do so.

"I can give you a mark of my friendship," said he, "by introducing you to the Marquis de Botta-Adamo, Governor of Tuscany; he is supposed to be a friend of the regent's."

I accepted his offer gratefully, and he began to sound me about Thérèse, but found my lips as tightly closed as the lid of a miser's coffer. I told him she was a child when I made the acquaintance of her family at Bologna, and that the resemblance between her brother and myself was a mere accident—a freak of nature. He happened to catch sight of a well-written manuscript on the table, and asked me if that superb writing was my secretary's. Costa, who was present, answered in Spanish that he wrote it. Gama overwhelmed him with compliments, and begged me to send Costa to him to copy some letters. I guessed that he wanted to pump him about me, and said that I needed his services all the day.

"Well, well, said the abbé, "another time will do." I gave him no answer. Such is the character of the curious.

I am not referring to that curiosity which depends on the occult sciences, and endeavours to pry into the future—the daughter of ignorance and su-

perstition, its victims are either foolish or ignorant. But the Abbé Gama was neither; he was naturally curious, and his employment made him still more so, for he was paid to find out everything. He was a diplomatist; if he had been a little lower down in the social scale he would have been treated as a spy.

He left me to pay some calls, promising to be back by dinner-time.

Dr. Vamini brought me another servant, of the same height as the first, and engaged that he should obey orders and guess nothing. I thanked the academician and inn-keeper, and ordered him to get me a sumptuous dinner.

The Corticelli was the first to arrive, bringing with her her brother, an effeminate-looking young man, who played the violin moderately well, and her mother, who informed me that she never allowed her daughter to dine out without herself and her son.

"Then you can take her back again this instant," said I, "or take this ducat to dine somewhere else, as I don't want your company or your son's."

She took the ducat, saying that she was sure she was leaving her daughter in good hands.

"You may be sure of that," said I, "so be off."

The daughter made such witty observations on the above dialogue that I could not help laughing, and I began to be in love with her. She was only thirteen, and was so small that she looked ten. She

was well-made, lively, witty, and fairer than is usual with Italian women, but to this day I cannot conceive how I fell in love with her.

The young wanton begged me to protect her against the manager of the opera, who was a Jew. In the agreement she had made with him he had engaged to let her dance a *pas de deux* in the second opera, and he had not kept his word. She begged me to compel the Jew to fulfil his engagement, and I promised to do so.

The next guest was Redegonde, who came from Parma. She was a tall, handsome woman, and Costa told me she was the sister of my new footman. After I had talked with her for two or three minutes I found her remarks well worthy of attention.

Then came the Abbé Gama, who congratulated me on being seated between two pretty girls. I made him take my place, and he began to entertain them as if to the manner born; and though the girls were laughing at him, he was not in the least disconcerted. He thought he was amusing them, and on watching his expression I saw that his self-esteem prevented him seeing that he was making a fool of himself; but I did not guess that I might make the same mistake at his age.

Wretched is the old man who will not recognize his old age; wretched unless he learn that the sex whom he seduced so often when he was young

will despise him now if he still attempts to gain their favour.

My fair Thérèse, with her husband and my son, was the last to arrive. I kissed Thérèse and then my son, and sat down between them, whispering to Thérèse that such a dear mysterious trinity must not be parted; at which Thérèse smiled sweetly. The abbé sat down between Redegonde and the Corticelli, and amused us all the time by his agreeable conversation.

I laughed internally when I observed how respectfully my new footman changed his sister's plate, who appeared vain of honours to which her brother could lay no claim. She was not kind; she whispered to me, so that he could not hear,—

“He is a good fellow, but unfortunately he is rather stupid.”

I had put in my pocket a superb gold snuff-box, richly enamelled and adorned with a perfect likeness of myself. I had had it made at Paris, with the intention of giving it to Madame d'Urfé, and I had not done so because the painter had made me too young. I had filled it with some excellent Havana snuff which M. de Chavigny had given me, and of which Thérèse was very fond; I was waiting for her to ask me for a pinch before I drew it out of my pocket.

The Abbé Gama, who had some exceedingly good snuff in an Origonela box, sent a pinch to

Thérèse, and she sent him her snuff in a tortoise-shell box encrusted with gold in arabesques—an exquisite piece of workmanship. Gama criticised Thérèse's snuff, while I said that I found it delicious but that I thought I had some better myself. I took out my snuff-box, and opening it offered her a pinch. She did not notice the portrait, but she agreed that my snuff was vastly superior to hers.

"Well, would you like to make an exchange?" said I.

"Certainly, give me some paper."

"That is not requisite; we will exchange the snuff and the snuff-boxes."

So saying, I put Thérèse's box in my pocket and gave her mine shut. When she saw the portrait, she gave a cry which puzzled everybody, and her first motion was to kiss the portrait.

"Look," said she to Cesarino, "here is your portrait."

Cesarino looked at it in astonishment, and the box passed from hand to hand. Everybody said that it was my portrait, taken ten years ago, and that it might pass for a likeness of Cesarino. Thérèse got quite excited, and swearing that she would never let the box out of her hands again, she went up to her son and kissed him several times. While this was going on I watched the Abbé Gama, and I could see that he was making internal comments of his own on this affecting scene.

The worthy abbé went away towards the evening, telling me that he would expect me to breakfast next morning.

I spent the rest of the day in making love to Redegonde, and Thérèse, who saw that I was pleased with the girl, advised me to declare myself, and promised that she would ask her to the house as often as I liked. But Thérèse did not know her.

Next morning Gama told me that he had informed Marshal Botta that I would come and see him, and he would present me at four o'clock. Then the worthy abbé, always the slave of his curiosity, reproached me in a friendly manner for not having told him anything about my fortune.

"I did not think it was worth mentioning, but as you are interested in the subject I may tell you that my means are small, but that I have friends whose purses are always open to me."

"If you have true friends you are a rich man, but true friends are scarce."

I left the Abbé Gama, my head full of Redegonde, whom I preferred to the young Corticelli, and I went to pay her a visit; but what a reception! She received me in a room in which were present her mother, her uncle, and three or four dirty, untidy little monkeys: these were her brothers.

"Haven't you a better room to receive your friends in?" said I.

"I have no friends, so I don't want a room."

"Get it, my dear, and you will find the friends come fast enough. This is all very well for you to welcome your relations in, but not persons like myself who come to do homage to your charms and your talents."

"Sir," said the mother, "my daughter has but few talents, and thinks nothing of her charms, which are small."

"You are extremely modest, and I appreciate your feelings; but everybody does not see your daughter with the same eyes, and she pleases me greatly."

"That is an honour for her, and we are duly sensible of it, but not so as to be over-proud. My daughter will see you as often as you please, but here, and in no other place."

"But I am afraid of being in the way here."

"An honest man is never in the way."

I felt ashamed, for nothing so confounds a libertine as modesty in the mouth of poverty; and not knowing what to answer I took my leave.

I told Thérèse of my unfortunate visit, and we both laughed at it; it was the best thing we could do.

"I shall be glad to see you at the opera," said she, "and you can get into my dressing-room if you give the door-keeper a small piece of money."

The Abbé Gama came as he promised, to take me to Marshal Botta, a man of high talents whom the affair of Genoa had already rendered famous. He

was in command of the Austrian army when the people, growing angry at the sight of the foreigners, who had only come to put them under the Austrian yoke, rose in revolt and made them leave the town. This patriotic riot saved the Republic. I found him in the midst of a crowd of ladies and gentlemen, whom he left to welcome me. He talked about Venice in a way that shewed he understood the country thoroughly, and I conversed to him on France, and, I believe, satisfied him. In his turn he spoke of the Court of Russia, at which he was staying when Elizabeth Petrovna, who was still reigning at the period in question, so easily mounted the throne of her father, Peter the Great. "It is only in Russia," said he, "that poison enters into politics."

At the time when the opera began the marshal left the room, and everybody went away. On my way the abbé assured me, as a matter of course, that I had pleased the governor, and I afterwards went to the theatre, and obtained admission to Thérèse's dressing-room for a tester. I found her in the hands of her pretty chamber-maid, and she advised me to go to Redegonde's dressing-room, as she played a man's part, and might, perhaps, allow me to assist in her toilette.

I followed her advice, but the mother would not let me come in, as her daughter was just going to dress. I assured her that I would turn my back all the time she was dressing, and on this condition she

let me in, and made me sit down at a table on which stood a mirror, which enabled me to see all Redegonde's most secret parts to advantage; above all, when she lifted her legs to put on her breeches, either most awkwardly or most cleverly, according to her intentions. She did not lose anything by what she shewed, however, for I was so pleased, that to possess her charms I would have signed any conditions she cared to impose upon me.

"Redegonde must know," I said to myself, "that I could see everything in the glass;" and the idea inflamed me. I did not turn round till the mother gave me leave, and I then admired my charmer as a young man of five feet one, whose shape left nothing to be desired.

Redegonde went out, and I followed her to the wings.

"My dear," said I, "I am going to talk plainly to you. You have inflamed my passions and I shall die if you do not make me happy."

"You do not say that you will die if you chance to make me unhappy."

"I could not say so, because I cannot conceive such a thing as possible. Do not trifle with me, dear Redegonde, you must be aware that I saw all in the mirror, and I cannot think that you are so cruel as to arouse my passions and then leave me to despair."

"What could you have seen? I don't know what you are talking about."

"May be, but know that I have seen all your charms. What shall I do to possess you?"

"To possess me? I don't understand you, sir; I'm an honest girl."

"I dare say; but you wouldn't be any less honest after making me happy. Dear Redegonde, do not let me languish for you, but tell me my fate now this instant."

"I do not know what to tell you, but you can come and see me whenever you like."

"When shall I find you alone?"

"Alone! I am never alone."

"Well, well, that's of no consequence; if only your mother is present, that comes to the same thing. If she is sensible, she will pretend not to see anything, and I will give you a hundred ducats each time."

"You are either a madman, or you do not know what sort of people we are."

With these words she went on, and I proceeded to tell Thérèse what had passed.

"Begin," said she, "by offering the hundred ducats to the mother, and if she refuses, have no more to do with them, and go elsewhere."

I returned to the dressing-room, where I found the mother alone, and without any ceremony spoke as follows:

"Good evening, madam, I am a stranger here; I am only staying a week, and I am in love with your daughter. If you like to be obliging, bring her to sup with me. I will give you a hundred sequins each time, so you see my purse is in your power."

"Whom do you think you are talking to, sir? I am astonished at your impudence. Ask the townsfolk what sort of character I bear, and whether my daughter is an honest girl or not! and you will not make such proposals again."

"Good-bye, madam."

"Good-bye, sir."

As I went out I met Redegonde, and I told her word for word the conversation I had had with her mother. She burst out laughing.

"Have I done well or ill?" said I.

"Well enough, but if you love me come and see me."

"See you after what your mother said?"

"Well, why not, who knows of it?"

"Who knows? You don't know me, Redegonde. I do not care to indulge myself in idle hopes, and I thought I had spoken to you plainly enough."

Feeling angry, and vowing to have no more to do with this strange girl, I supped with Thérèse, and spent three delightful hours with her. I had a great deal of writing to do the next day and kept in doors, and in the evening I had a visit from the young Corticelli, her mother and brother. She

begged me to keep my promise regarding the manager of the theatre, who would not let her dance the *pas de deux* stipulated for in the agreement.

"Come and breakwast with me to-morrow morning," said I, "and I will speak to the Israelite in your presence—at least I will do so if he comes."

"I love you very much," said the young wanton, "can't I stop a little longer here?"

"You may stop as long as you like, but as I have got some letters to finish, I must ask you to excuse my entertaining you."

"Oh! just as you please."

I told Costa to give her some supper.

I finished my letters and felt inclined for a little amusement, so I made the girl sit by me and proceeded to toy with her, but in such a way that her mother could make no objection. All at once the brother came up and tried to join in the sport, much to my astonishment.

"Get along with you," said I, "you are not a girl."

At this the young scoundred proceeded to shew me his sex, but in such an indecent fashion that his sister, who was sitting on my knee, burst out laughing and took refuge with her mother, who was sitting at the other end of the room in gratitude for the good supper I had given her. I rose from my chair, and after giving the impudent pederast a box on the ear I asked the mother with what intentions

she had brought the young rascal to my house. By way of reply the infamous woman said,——

“He’s a pretty lad, isn’t he?”

I gave him a ducat for the blow I had given him, and told the mother to begone, as she disgusted me. The pathic took my ducat, kissed my hand, and they all departed.

I went to bed feeling amused at the incident, and wondering at the wickedness of a mother who would prostitute her own son to the basest of vices.

Next morning I sent and asked the Jew to call on me. The Corticelli came with her mother, and the Jew soon after, just as we were going to breakfast.

I proceeded to explain the grievance of the young dancer, and I read the agreement he had made with her, telling him politely that I could easily force him to fulfil it. The Jew put in several excuses, of which the Corticelli demonstrated the futility. At last the son of Judah was forced to give in, and promised to speak to the ballet-master the same day, in order that she might dance the *pas* with the actor she named.

“And that, I hope, will please your excellency,” he added, with a low bow, which is not often a proof of sincerity, especially among Jews.

When my guests had taken leave I went to the Abbé Gama, to dine with Marshal Botta who had asked us to dinner. I made the acquaintance there

of Sir —— Mann, the English ambassador, who was the idol of Florence, very rich, of the most pleasing manners although an Englishman, full of wit, taste, and a great lover of the fine arts. He invited me to come next day and see his house and garden. In this home he had made—furniture, pictures, choice books—all shewed the man of genius. He called on me, asked me to dinner, and had the politeness to include Thérèse, her husband, and Cesarino in the invitation. After dinner my son sat down at the clavier and delighted the company by his exquisite playing. While we were talking of likenesses, Sir —— Mann shewed us some miniatures of great beauty.

Before leaving, Thérèse told me that she had been thinking seriously of me.

“In what respect?” I asked.

“I have told Redegonde that I am going to call for her, that I will keep her to supper, and have her taken home. You must see that this last condition is properly carried out. Come to supper too, and have your carriage in waiting. I leave the rest to you. You will only be a few minutes with her, but that’s something; and the first step leads far.”

“An excellent plan. I will sup with you, and my carriage shall be ready. I will tell you all about it to-morrow.”

I went to the house at nine o’clock, and was welcomed as an unexpected guest. I told Redegonde

that I was glad to meet her, and she replied that she had not hoped to have the pleasure of seeing me. Redegonde was the only one who had any appetite; she ate capitally, and laughed merrily at the stories I told her.

After supper Thérèse asked her if she would like to have a sedan-chair sent for, or if she would prefer to be taken back in my carriage.

"If the gentleman will be so kind," said she, "I need not send for a chair."

I thought this reply of such favourable omen that I no longer doubted of my success. After she had wished the others good night, she took my arm, pressing it as she did so; we went down the stairs, and she got into the carriage. I got in after her, and on attempting to sit down I found the place taken.

"Who is that?" I cried.

Redegonde burst out laughing, and informed me it was her mother.

I was done; I could not summon up courage to pass it off as a jest. Such a shock makes a man stupid; for a moment it numbs all the mental faculties, and wounded self-esteem only gives place to anger.

I sat down on the front seat and coldly asked the mother why she had not come up to supper with us. When the carriage stopped at their door, she asked me to come in, but I told her I would rather not. I felt that for a little more I would have boxed

her ears, and the man at the house door looked very like a cut-throat.

I felt enraged and excited physically as well as mentally, and though I had never been to see the Corticelli, told the coachman to drive there immediately, as I felt sure of finding her well disposed. Everybody was gone to bed. I knocked at the door till I got an answer, I gave my name, and I was let in, everything being in total darkness. The mother told me she would light a candle, and that if she had expected me she would have waited up in spite of the cold. I felt as if I were in the middle of an iceberg. I heard the girl laughing, and going up to the bed and passing my hand over it I came across some plain tokens of the masculine gender. I had got hold of her brother. In the meanwhile the mother had got a candle, and I saw the girl with the bedclothes up to her chin, for, like her brother, she was as naked as my hand. Although no Puritan, I was shocked.

"Why do you allow this horrible union?" I said to the mother.

"What harm is there? They are brother and sister."

"That's just what makes it a criminal matter."

"Everything is perfectly innocent."

"Possibly; but it's not a good plan."

The pathic escaped from the bed and crept into his mother's, while the little wanton told me there

was really no harm, as they only loved each other as brother and sister, and that if I wanted her to sleep by herself all I had to do was to get her a new bed. This speech, delivered with arch simplicity, in her Bolognese jargon, made me laugh with all my heart, for in the violence of her gesticulations she had disclosed half her charms, and I saw nothing worth looking at. In spite of that, it was doubtless decreed that I should fall in love with her skin, for that was all she had.

If I had been alone I should have brought matters to a crisis on the spot, but I had a distaste to the presence of her mother and her scoundrelly brother. I was afraid lest some unpleasant scenes might follow. I gave her ten ducats to buy a bed, said good night, and left the house. I returned to my lodging, cursing the too scrupulous mothers of the opera girls.

I passed the whole of the next morning with Sir —— Mann, in his gallery, which contained some exquisite paintings, sculptures, mosaics, and engraved gems. On leaving him, I called on Thérèse and informed her of my misadventure of the night before. She laughed heartily at my story, and I laughed too, in spite of a feeling of anger due to my wounded self-esteem.

“You must console yourself,” said she; “you will not find much difficulty in filling the place in your affections.”

"Ah! why are you married?"

"Well, it's done; and there's no helping it. But listen to me. As you can't do without someone, take up with the Corticelli; she's as good as any other woman, and won't keep you waiting long."

On my return to my lodging, I found the Abbé Gama, whom I had invited to dinner, and he asked me if I would accept a post to represent Portugal at the approaching European Congress at Augsburg. He told me that if I did the work well, I could get anything I liked at Lisbon.

"I am ready to do my best," said I; "you have only to write to me, and I will tell you where to direct your letters." This proposal made me long to become a diplomatist.

In the evening I went to the opera-house and spoke to the ballet-master, the dancer who was to take part in the *pas de deux*, and to the Jew, who told me that my *protégée* should be satisfied in two or three days, and that she should perform her favourite *pas* for the rest of the carnival. I saw the Corticelli, who told me she had got her bed, and asked me to come to supper. I accepted the invitation, and when the opera was over I went to her house.

Her mother, feeling sure that I would pay the bill, had ordered an excellent supper for four, and several flasks of the best Florence wine. Besides that, she gave me a bottle of the wine called Oleatico,

which I found excellent. The three Corticellis unaccustomed to good fare and wine, ate like a troop, and began to get intoxicated. The mother and son went to bed without ceremony, and the little wanton invited me to follow their example. I should have liked to do so, but I did not dare. It was very cold and there was no fire in the room, there was only one blanket on the bed, and I might have caught a bad cold, and I was too fond of my good health to expose myself to such a danger. I therefore satisfied myself by taking her on my knee, and after a few preliminaries she abandoned herself to my transports, endeavouring to persuade me that I had got her maidenhead. I pretended to believe her, though I cared very little whether it were so or not.

I left her after I had repeated the dose three or four times, and gave her fifty sequins, telling her to get a good wadded coverlet and a large brazier, as I wanted to sleep with her the next night.

Next morning I received an extremely interesting letter from Grenoble. M. de Valenglard informed me that the fair Mdle. Roman, feeling convinced that her horoscope would never come true unless she went to Paris, had gone to the capital with her aunt.

Her destiny was a strange one; it depended on the liking I had taken to her and my aversion to marriage, for it lay in my power to have married the handsomest woman in France, and in that case

it is not likely that she would have become the mistress of Louis XV. What strange whim could have made me indicate in her horoscope the necessity of her journeying to Paris; for even if there were such a science as astrology I was no astrologer; in fine, her destiny depended on my absurd fancy. And in history, what a number of extraordinary events would never have happened if they had not been predicted!

In the evening I went to the theatre, and found my Corticelli clad in a pretty cloak, while the other girls looked at me contemptuously, for they were enraged at the place being taken; while the proud favourite caressed me with an air of triumph which became her to admiration.

In the evening I found a good supper awaiting me, a large brazier on the hearth, and a warm coverlet on the bed. The mother shewed me all the things her daughter had bought, and complained that she had not got any clothes for her brother. I made her happy by giving her a few louis.

When I went to bed I did not find my mistress in any amorous transports, but in a wanton and merry mood. She made me laugh, and as she let me do as I liked I was satisfied. I gave her a watch when I left her, and promised to sup with her on the following night. She was to have danced the *pas de deux*, and I went to see her do it, but to my astonishment she only danced with the other girls.

When I went to supper I found her in despair.

She wept and said that I must avenge her on the Jew, who had excused himself by putting the fault on somebody else, but that he was a liar. I promised everything to quiet her, and after spending several hours in her company I returned home, determined to give the Jew a bad quarter of an hour. Next morning I sent Costa to ask him to call on me, but the rascal sent back word that he was not coming, and if the Corticelli did not like his theatre she might try another.

I was indignant, but I knew that I must dissemble, so I only laughed. Nevertheless, I had pronounced his doom, for an Italian never forgets to avenge himself on his enemy; he knows it is the pleasure of the gods.

As soon as Costa had left the room, I called Le Duc and told him the story, saying that if I did not take vengeance I should be dishonoured, and that it was only he who could procure the scoundrel a good thrashing for daring to insult me.

"But you know, Le Duc, the affair must be kept secret."

"I only want twenty-four hours to give you an answer."

I knew what he meant, and I was satisfied.

Next morning Le Duc told me he had spent the previous day in learning the Jew's abode and habits, without asking anybody any questions.

"To-day I will not let him go out of my sight.

I shall find out at what hour he returns home, and to-morrow you shall know the result."

"Be discreet," said I, "and don't let anybody into your plans."

"Not I."

Next day, he told me that if the Jew came home at the same time and by the same way as before, he would have a thrashing before he got to bed.

"Whom have you chosen for this expedition?"

"Myself. These affairs ought to be kept secret, and a secret oughtn't to be known to more than two people. I am sure that everything will turn out well, but when you are satisfied that the ass's hide has been well tanned, will there be anything to be picked up?"

"Twenty-five sequins."

"That will do nicely. When I have done the trick I shall put on my great coat again and return by the back door. If necessary Costa himself will be able to swear that I did not leave the house, and that therefore I cannot have committed the assault. However, I shall put my pistols in my pocket in case of accidents, and if anybody tries to arrest me I shall know how to defend myself."

Next morning he came coolly into my room while Costa was putting on my dressing-gown, and when we were alone he said,——

"The thing's done. Instead of the Jew's running away when he received the first blow he threw

himself on to the ground. Then I tanned his skin for him nicely, but on hearing some people coming up I ran off. I don't know whether I did for him, but I gave him two sturdy blows on the head. I should be sorry if he were killed, as then he could not see about the dance."

This jest did not arouse my mirth; the matter promised to be too serious.

Thérèse had asked me to dine with the Abbé Gama and M. Sassi, a worthy man, if one may prostitute the name of man to describe a being whom cruelty has separated from the rest of humanity; he was the first *castrato* of the opera. Of course the Jew's mishap was discussed.

"I am sorry for him," said I, "though he is a rascally fellow."

"I am not at all sorry for him myself," said Sassi, "he's a knave. I daresay that everybody will be putting down his wooden baptism to my account."

"No," said the abbé, "people say that M. Casanova did the deed for good reasons of his own."

"It will be difficult to pitch on the right man," I answered, "the rascal has pushed so many worthy people to extremities that he must have a great many thrashings owing him."

The conversation then passed to other topics, and we had a very pleasant dinner.

In a few days the Jew left his bed with a large plaster on his nose, and although I was generally

regarded as the author of his misfortune the matter was gradually allowed to drop, as there were only vague suspicions to go upon. But the Corticelli, in an ecstasy of joy, was stupid enough to talk as if she were sure it was I who had avenged her, and she got into a rage when I would not admit the deed; but, as may be guessed, I was not foolish enough to do so, as her imprudence might have been a hanging matter for me.

I was well enough amused at Florence, and had no thoughts of leaving, when one day Vannini gave me a letter which someone had left for me. I opened it in his presence, and found it contained a bill of exchange for two hundred Florentine crowns on Sasso Sassi. Vannini looked at it and told me it was a good one. I went into my room to read the letter, and I was astonished to find it signed "Charles Ivanoff." He dated it from Pistoia, and told me that in his poverty and misfortune he had appealed to an Englishman who was leaving Florence for Lucca, and had generously given him a bill of exchange for two hundred crowns, which he had written in his presence. It was made payable to bearer.

"I daren't cash it in Florence," said he, "as I am afraid of being arrested for my unfortunate affair at Genoa. I entreat you, then, to have pity on me, to get the bill cashed, and to bring me the money here, that I may pay my landlord and go."

It looked like a very simple matter, but I might get into trouble, for the note might be forged; and even if it were not I should be declaring myself a friend or a correspondent, at all events, of a man who had been posted. In this dilemma I took the part of taking the bill of exchange to him in person. I went to the posting establishment, hired two horses, and drove to Pistoia. The landlord himself took me to the rascal's room, and left me alone with him. I did not stay more than three minutes, and all I said was that as Sassi knew me I did not wish him to think that there was any kind of connection between us.

"I advise you," I said, "to give the bill to your landlord, who will cash it at M. Sassi's and bring you your change."

"I will follow your advice," he said, and I there-with returned to Florence.

I thought no more of it, but in two days' time I received a visit from M. Sasso Sassi and the landlord of the inn at Pistoia. The banker shewed me the bill of exchange, and said that the person who had given it me had deceived me, as it was not in the writing of the Englishman whose name it bore, and that even if it were, the Englishman not having any money with Sassi could not draw a bill of exchange.

"The inn-keeper here," said he, "discounted the bill, the Russian has gone off, and when I told

him that it was a forgery he said that he knew Charles Ivanoff had it of you, and that thus he had made no difficulty in cashing it; but now he wants you to return him two hundred crowns."

"Then he will be disappointed!"

I told all the circumstances of the affair to Sassi; I shewed him the rascal's letter; I made Dr. Vannini, who had given it me, come up, and he said he was ready to swear that he had seen me take the bill of exchange out of the letter, that he had examined it, and had thought it good.

On this the banker told the inn-keeper that he had no business to ask me to pay him the money; but he persisted in his demand, and dared to say that I was an accomplice of the Russian's.

In my indignation I ran for my cane, but the banker held me by the arm, and the impertinent fellow made his escape without a thrashing.

"You had a right to be angry," said Mr. Sassi, "but you must not take any notice of what the poor fellow says in his blind rage."

He shook me by the hand and went out.

Next day the chief of police, called the auditor at Florence, sent me a note begging me to call on him. There was no room for hesitation, for as a stranger I felt that I might look on this invitation as an intimation. He received me very politely, but he said I should have to repay the landlord his two hundred crowns, as he would not have

discounted the bill if he had not seen me bring it. I replied that as a judge he could not condemn me unless he thought me the Russian's accomplice, but instead of answering he repeated that I would have to pay.

"Sir," I replied, "I will not pay."

He rang the bell and bowed, and I left him, walking towards the banker's, to whom I imparted the conversation I had had from the auditor. He was extremely astonished, and at my request called on him to try and make him listen to reason. As we parted I told him that I was dining with the Abbé Gama.

When I saw the abbé I told him what had happened, and he uttered a loud exclamation of astonishment.

"I foresee," he said, "that the auditor will not let go his hold, and if M. Sassi does not succeed with him I advise you to speak to Marshal Botta."

"I don't think that will be necessary; the auditor can't force me to pay."

"He can do worse."

"What can he do?"

"He can make you leave Florence."

"Well, I shall be astonished if he uses his power in this case, but rather than pay I will leave the town. Let us go to the marshal."

We called on him at four o'clock, and we found

the banker there, who had told him the whole story.

"I am sorry to tell you," said M. Sassi, "that I could do nothing with the auditor, and if you want to remain in Florence you will have to pay."

"I will leave as soon as I receive the order," said I; "and as soon as I reach another state I will print the history of this shameful perversion of justice."

"It's an incredible, a monstrous sentence!" said the marshal, "and I am sorry I cannot interfere. You are quite right," he added, "to leave the place rather than pay."

Early the next morning a police official brought me a letter from the auditor, informing me that as he could not, from the nature of the case, oblige me to pay, he was forced to warn me to leave Florence in three days, and Tuscany in seven. This, he added, he did in virtue of his office; but whenever the Grand Duke, to whom I might appeal, had quashed his judgment I might return.

I took a piece of paper and wrote upon it, "Your judgment is an iniquitous one, but it shall be obeyed to the letter."

At that moment I gave orders to pack up and have all in readiness for my departure. I spent the three days of respite in amusing myself with Thérèse. I also saw the worthy Sir — Mann, and

I promised the Corticelli to fetch her in Lent, and spend some time with her in Bologna. The Abbé Gama did not leave my side for the three days, and shewed himself my true friend. It was a kind of triumph for me; on every side I heard regrets at my departure, and curses of the auditor. The Marquis Botta seemed to approve my conduct by giving me a dinner, the table being laid for thirty, and the company being composed of the most distinguished people in Florence. This was a delicate attention on his part, of which I was very sensible.

I consecrated the last day to Thérèse, but I could not find any opportunity to ask her for a last consoling embrace, which she would not have refused me under the circumstances, and which I should still fondly remember. We promised to write often to one another, and we embraced each other in a way to make her husband's heart ache. Next day I started on my journey, and got to Rome in thirty-six hours.

It was midnight when I passed under the Porta del Popolo, for one may enter the Eternal City at any time. I was then taken to the custom-house, which is always open, and my mails were examined. The only thing they are strict about at Rome is books, as if they feared the light. I had about thirty volumes, all more or less against the Papacy, religion, or the virtues inculcated thereby. I had resolved to surrender them without any dispute, as

I felt tired and wanted to go to bed, but the clerk told me politely to count them and leave them in his charge for the night, and he would bring them to my hotel in the morning. I did so, and he kept his word. He was well enough pleased when he touched the two sequins with which I rewarded him.

I put up at the *Ville de Paris*, in the *Piazza di Spagna*. It is the best inn in the town. All the world, I found, was drowned in sleep, but when they let me in they asked me to wait on the ground floor while a fire was lighted in my room. All the seats were covered with dresses, petticoats, and chemises, and I heard a small feminine voice begging me to sit on her bed. I approached and saw a laughing mouth, and two black eyes shining like carbuncles.

"What splendid eyes!" said I, "let me kiss them."

By way of reply she hid her head under the coverlet, and I slid a hasty hand under the sheets; but finding her quite naked, I drew it back and begged pardon. She put out her head again, and I thought I read gratitude for my moderation in her eyes.

"Who are you, my angel?"

"I am Thérèse, the inn-keeper's daughter, and this is my sister." There was another girl beside her, whom I had not seen, as her head was under the bolster.

"How old are you?"

"Nearly seventeen."

"I hope I shall see you in my room to-morrow morning."

"Have you any ladies with you?"

"No."

"That's a pity, as we never go to the gentlemen's rooms."

"Lower the coverlet a little; I can't hear what you say."

"It's too cold."

"Dear Thérèse, your eyes make me feel as if I were in flames."

She put back her head at this, and I grew daring, and after sundry experiments I was more than ever charmed with her. I caressed her in a somewhat lively manner, and drew back my hand, again apologizing for my daring, and when she let me see her face I thought I saw delight rather than anger in her eyes and on her cheeks, and I felt hopeful with regard to her. I was just going to begin again, for I felt on fire, when a handsome chambermaid came to tell me that my room was ready and my fire lighted.

"Farewell till to-morrow," said I to Thérèse, but she only answered by turning on her side to go to sleep.

I went to bed after ordering dinner for one o'clock, and I slept till noon, dreaming of Thérèse. When I woke up, Costa told me that he had found

out where my brother lived, and had left a note at the house. This was my brother Jean, then about thirty, and a pupil of the famous Raphael Mengs. This painter was then deprived of his pension on account of a war which obliged the King of Poland to live at Warsaw, as the Prussians occupied the whole electorate of Saxe. I had not seen my brother for ten years, and I kept our meeting as a holiday. I was sitting down to table when he came, and we embraced each other with transport. We spent an hour in telling, he his small adventures, and I my grand ones, and he told me that I should not stay at the hotel, which was too dear, but come and live at the Chevalier Mengs's house, which contained an empty room, where I could stay at a much cheaper rate.

"As to your table, there is a restaurant in the house where one can get a capital meal."

"Your advice is excellent," said I, "but I have not the courage to follow it, as I am in love with my landlord's daughter;" and I told him what had happened the night before.

"That's a mere nothing," said he, laughing; "you can cultivate her acquaintance without staying in the house."

I let myself be persuaded, and I promised to come to him the following day; and then we proceeded to take a walk about Rome.

I had many interesting memories of my last

visit, and I wanted to renew my acquaintance with those who had interested me at that happy age when such impressions are so durable because they touch the heart rather than the mind; but I had to make up my mind to a good many disappointments, considering the space of time that had elapsed since I had been in Rome.

I went to the Minerva to find Donna Cecilia; she was no more in this world. I found out where her daughter Angelica lived, and I went to see her, but she gave me a poor reception, and said that she really scarcely remembered me.

"I can say the same," I replied, "for you are not the Angelica I used to know. Good-bye, madam!"

The lapse of time had not improved her personal appearance. I found out also where the printer's son, who had married Barbaruccia, lived, but I put off the pleasure of seeing him till another time, and also my visit to the Reverend Father Georgi, who was a man of great repute in Rome. Gaspar Vivaldi had gone into the country.

My brother took me to Madame Cherubini. I found her mansion to be a splendid one, and the lady welcomed me in the Roman manner. I thought her pleasant and her daughters still more so, but I thought the crowd of lovers too large and too miscellaneous. There was too much luxury and ceremony, and the girls, one of whom was as fair as Love

himself, were too polite to everybody. An interesting question was put to me, to which I answered in such a manner as to elicit another question, but to no purpose. I saw that the rank of my brother, who had introduced me, prevented my being thought a person of any consequence, and on hearing an abbé say, "He's Casanova's brother," I turned to him and said,——

"That's not correct; you should say Casanova's my brother."

"That comes to the same thing."

"Not at all, my dear abbé."

I said these words in a tone which commanded attention, and another abbé said,——

"The gentleman is quite right; it does *not* come to the same thing."

The first abbé made no reply to this. The one who had taken my part, and was my friend from that moment, was the famous Winckelmann, who was unhappily assassinated at Trieste twelve years afterwards.

While I was talking to him, Cardinal Alexander Albani arrived. Winckelmann presented me to his eminence, who was nearly blind. He talked to me a great deal, without saying anything worth listening to. As soon as he heard that I was the Casanova who had escaped from The Leads, he said in a somewhat rude tone that he wondered I had the hardihood to come to Rome, where on the slightest hint

from the State Inquisitors at Venice an *ordine santissimo* would re-consign me to my prison. I was annoyed by this unseemly remark, and replied in a dignified voice,——

“It is not my hardihood in coming to Rome that your eminence should wonder at, but a man of any sense would wonder at the Inquisitors if they had the hardihood to issue an *ordine santissimo* against me; for they would be perplexed to allege any crime in me as a pretext for thus infamously depriving me of my liberty.”

This reply silenced his eminence. He was ashamed at having taken me for a fool, and to see that I thought him one. Shortly after I left and never set foot in that house again.

The Abbé Winckelmann went out with my brother and myself, and as he came with me to my hotel he did me the honour of staying to supper. Winckelmann was the second volume of the celebrated Abbé de Voisenon. He called for me next day, and we went to Villa Albani to see the Chevalier Mengs, who was then living there and painting a ceiling.

My landlord Roland (who knew my brother) paid me a visit at supper. Roland came from Avignon and was fond of good living. I told him I was sorry to be leaving him to stay with my brother, because I had fallen in love with his daughter Thérèse, although I had only spoken to her for a few minutes, and had only seen her head.

"You saw her in bed, I will bet."

"Exactly, and I should very much like to see the rest of her. Would you be so kind as to ask her to step up for a few minutes?"

"With all my heart."

She came upstairs, seeming only too glad to obey her father's summons. She had a lithe, graceful figure, her eyes were of surpassing brilliancy, her features exquisite, her mouth charming; but taken altogether I did not like her so well as before. In return, my poor brother became enamoured of her to such an extent that he ended by becoming her slave. He married her next year, and two years afterwards he took her to Dresden. I saw her five years later with a pretty baby; but after ten years of married life she died of consumption.

I found Mengs at the Villa Albani; he was an indefatigable worker, and extremely original in his conceptions. He welcomed me, and said he was glad to be able to lodge me at his house in Rome, and that he hoped to return home himself in a few days, with his whole family. I was astonished with the Villa Albani. It had been built by Cardinal Alexander, and had been wholly constructed from antique materials to satisfy the cardinal's love for classic art; not only the statues and the vases, but the columns, the pedestals—in fact, everything was Greek. He was a Greek himself, and had a perfect knowledge of antique work, and had contrived to

spend comparatively little money compared with the masterpiece he had produced. If a sovereign monarch had had a villa like the cardinal's built, it would have cost him fifty million francs, but the cardinal made a much cheaper bargain.

As he could not get any ancient ceilings, he was obliged to have them painted, and Mengs was undoubtedly the greatest and the most laborious painter of his age. It is a great pity that death carried him off in the midst of his career, as otherwise he would have enriched the stores of art with numerous masterpieces. My brother never did anything to justify his title of pupil of this great artist. When I come to my visit to Spain in 1767, I shall have some more to say about Mengs.

As soon as I was settled with my brother I hired a carriage, a coachman, and a footman, whom I put into fancy livery, and I called on Monsignor Cornaro, auditor of the rota, with the intention of making my way into good society, but fearing lest he as a Venetian might get compromised, he introduced me to Cardinal Passionei, who spoke of me to the sovereign pontiff.

Before I pass on to anything else, I will inform my readers of what took place on the occasion of my second visit to this odd cardinal, a great enemy of the Jesuits, a wit, and man of letters.

CHAPTER VIII

CARDINAL PASSIONEI—THE POPE—MARIUCCIA—I ARRIVE AT NAPLES

CARDINAL PASSIONEI received me in a large hall where he was writing. He begged me to wait till he had finished, but he could not ask me to take a seat as he occupied the only chair that his vast room contained.

When he had put down his pen, he rose, came to me, and after informing me that he would tell the Holy Father of my visit, he added,——

“My brother Cornaro might have made a better choice, as he knows the Pope does not like me.”

“He thought it better to choose the man who is esteemed than the man who is merely liked.”

“I don’t know whether the Pope esteems me, but I am sure he knows I don’t esteem him. I both liked and esteemed him before he was pope, and I concurred in his election, but since he has worn the tiara it’s a different matter; he has shewn himself too much of a *coglione*.”

“The conclave ought to have chosen your eminence.”

“No, no; I’m a root-and-branch reformer, and my hand would not have been stayed for fear of the vengeance of the guilty, and God alone knows what would have come of that. The only cardinal fit to be pope was Tamburini; but it can’t be helped now. I hear people coming; good-bye, come again to-morrow.”

What a delightful thing to have heard a cardinal call the Pope a fool, and name Tamburini as a fit person. I did not lose a moment in noting this pleasant circumstance down: it was too precious a morsel to let slip. But who was Tamburini? I had never heard of him. I asked Winckelmann, who dined with me.

“He’s a man deserving of respect for his virtues, his character, his firmness, and his farseeing intelligence. He has never disguised his opinion of the Jesuits, whom he styles the fathers of deceits, intrigues, and lies; and that’s what made Passionei mention him. I think, with him, that Tamburini would be a great and good pope.”

I will here note down what I heard at Rome nine years later from the mouth of a tool of the Jesuits. The Cardinal Tamburini was at the last gasp, and the conversation turned upon him, when somebody else said,—

“This Benedictine cardinal is an impious fellow after all; he is on his death-bed, and he has asked

for the viaticum, without wishing to purify his soul by confession."

I did not make any remark, but feeling as if I should like to know the truth of the matter I asked somebody about it next day, my informant being a person who must have known the truth, and could not have had any motive for disguising the real facts of the case. He told me that the cardinal had said mass three days before, and that if he had not asked for a confessor it was doubtless because he had nothing to confess.

Unfortunate are they that love the truth, and do not seek it out at its source. I hope the reader will pardon this digression, which is not without interest.

Next day I went to see Cardinal Passionei, who told me I was quite right to come early, as he wanted to learn all about my escape from The Leads, of which he had heard some wonderful tales told.

"I shall be delighted to satisfy your eminence, but the story is a long one."

"All the better; they say you tell it well."

"But, my lord, am I to sit down on the floor?"

"No, no; your dress is too good for that."

He rang his bell, and having told one of his gentlemen to send up a seat, a servant brought in a stool. A seat without a back and without arms! It made me quite angry. I cut my story short, told

it badly, and had finished in a quarter of an hour.

"I write better than you speak," said he.

"My lord, I never speak well except when I am at my ease."

"But you are not afraid of me?"

"No, my lord, a true man and a philosopher can never make me afraid; but this stool of yours. . . ."

"You like to be at your ease, above all things."

"Take this, it is the funeral oration of Prince Eugène; I make you a present of it. I hope you will approve of my Latinity. You can kiss the Pope's feet to-morrow at ten o'clock."

When I got home, as I reflected on the character of this strange cardinal—a wit, haughty, vain, and boastful, I resolved to make him a fine present. It was the *Pandectarum liber unicus* which M. de F—— had given me at Berne, and which I did not know what to do with. It was a folio well printed on fine paper, choicely bound, and in perfect preservation. As chief librarian the present should be a valuable one to him, all the more as he had a large private library, of which my friend the Abbé Winckelmann was librarian. I therefore wrote a short Latin letter, which I enclosed in another to Winckelmann, whom I begged to present my offering to his eminence. I thought it was as valuable as his funeral oration at any rate, and I hoped that he would give me a more comfortable chair for the future.

Next morning, at the time appointed, I went to Monte Cavallo, which ought to be called Monte Cavalli, as it gets its name from two fine statues of horses standing on a pedestal in the midst of the square, where the Holy Father's palace is situated.

I had no real need of being presented to the Pope by anyone, as any Christian is at liberty to go in when he sees the door open. Besides I had known His Holiness when he was Bishop of Padua; but I had preferred to claim the honour of being introduced by a cardinal.

After saluting the Head of the Faithful, and kissing the holy cross embroidered on his holy slipper, the Pope put his right hand on my left shoulder, and said he remembered that I always forsook the assembly at Padua, when he intoned the Rosary.

"Holy Father, I have much worse sins than that on my conscience, so I come prostrate at your foot to receive your absolution."

He then gave me his benediction, and asked me very graciously what he could do for me.

"I beg Your Holiness to plead for me, that I may be able to return to Venice."

"We will speak of it to the ambassador, and then we will speak again to you on the matter."

"Do you often go and see Cardinal Passionei?"

"I have been three times. He gave me his funeral oration on Prince Eugène, and in return I sent him the Pandects."

"Has he accepted them?"

"I think so, Holy Father."

"If he has, he will send Winckelmann to pay you for them."

"That would be treating me like a bookseller; I will not receive any payment."

"Then he will return the volume of the Pandects; we are sure of it, he always does so."

"If his eminence returns me the Pandects, I will return him his funeral oration."

At this the Pope laughed till his sides shook.

"We shall be pleased to hear the end of the story without anyone being informed of our innocent curiosity."

With these words, a long benediction delivered with much unction informed me that my audience was at an end.

As I was leaving His Holiness's palace, I was accosted by an old abbé, who asked me respectfully if I were not the M. Casanova who had escaped from The Leads.

"Yes," said I, "I am the man."

"Heaven be praised, worthy sir, that I see you again in such good estate!"

"But whom have I the honour of addressing?"

"Don't you recollect me? I am Momolo, formerly gondolier at Venice."

"Have you entered holy orders, then?"

"Not at all, but here everyone wears the cassock."

I am the first *scopatore* (sweeper) of His Holiness the Pope."

"I congratulate you on your appointment, but you musn't mind me laughing."

"Laugh as much as you like. My wife and daughters laugh when I put on the cassock and bands, and I laugh myself, but here the dress gains one respect. Come and see us."

"Where do you live?"

"Behind the Trinity of Monti; here's my address."

"I will come to-night."

I went home delighted with this meeting, and determined to enjoy the evening with my Venetian boatman. I got my brother to come with me, and I told him how the Pope had received me.

The Abbé Winckelmann came in the afternoon and informed me that I was fortunate enough to be high in favour with his cardinal, and that the book I had sent him was very valuable; it was a rare work, and in much better condition than the Vatican copy.

"I am commissioned to pay you for it."

"I have told his eminence that it was a present."

"He never accepts books as presents, and he wants yours for his own library; and as he is librarian of the Vatican Library he is afraid lest people might say unpleasant things."

"That's all very well, but I am not a book-

seller; and as this book only cost me the trouble of accepting it, I am determined only to sell it at the same price. Pray ask the cardinal to honour me by accepting it."

"He is sure to send it back to you."

"He can if he likes, but I will send back his funeral oration, as I am not going to be under an obligation to anyone who refuses to take a present from me."

Next morning the eccentric cardinal returned me my Pandects, and I immediately returned his funeral oration, with a letter in which I pronounced it a masterpiece of composition, though I had barely glanced over it in reality. My brother told me I was wrong, but I did not trouble what he said, not caring to guide myself by his rulings.

In the evening my brother and I went to the *scopatore santissimo*, who was expecting me, and had announced me to his family as a prodigy of a man. I introduced my brother, and proceeded to a close scrutiny of the family. I saw an elderly woman, four girls, of whom the eldest was twenty-four, two small boys, and above all universal ugliness. It was not inviting for a man of voluptuous tastes, but I was there, and the best thing was to put a good face on it; so I stayed and enjoyed myself. Besides the general ugliness, the household presented the picture of misery, for the *scopatore santissimo* and his numerous family were obliged to live on two hundred

Roman crowns a year, and as there are no perquisites attached to the office of apostolic sweeper, he was compelled to furnish all needs out of this slender sum. In spite of that Momolo was a most generous man. As soon as he saw me seated he told me he should have liked to give me a good supper, but there was only pork chops and a polenta.

"They are very nice," said I; "but will you allow me to send for half a dozen flasks of Orvieto from my lodging?"

"You are master here."

I wrote a note to Costa, telling him to bring the six flasks directly, with a cooked ham. He came in half an hour, and the four girls cried when they saw him, "What a fine fellow!" I saw Costa was delighted with this reception, and said to Momolo,—

"If you like him as well as your girls I will let him stay."

Costa was charmed with such honour being shewn him, and after thanking me went into the kitchen to help the mother with the polenta.

The large table was covered with a clean cloth, and soon after they brought in two huge dishes of polenta and an enormous pan full of chops. We were just going to begin when a knocking on the street door was heard.

"'Tis Signora Maria and her mother," said one of the boys.

At this announcement I saw the four girls pull-

ing a wry face. "Who asked them?" said one. "What do they want?" said another. "What troublesome people they are!" said a third. "They might have stayed at home," said the fourth. But the good, kindly father said, "My children, they are hungry, and they shall share what Providence has given us."

I was deeply touched with the worthy man's kindness. I saw that true Christian charity is more often to be found in the breasts of the poor than the rich, who are so well provided for that they cannot feel for the wants of others.

While I was making these wholesome reflections the two hungry ones came in. One was a young woman of a modest and pleasant aspect, and the other her mother, who seemed very humble and as if ashamed of their poverty. The daughter saluted the company with that natural grace which is a gift of nature, apologizing in some confusion for her presence, and saying that she would not have taken the liberty to come if she had known there was company. The worthy Momolo was the only one who answered her, and he said, kindly, that she had done quite right to come, and put her a chair between my brother and myself. I looked at her and thought her a perfect beauty.

Then the eating began and there was no more talking. The polenta was excellent, the chops delicious, and the ham perfect, and in less than an hour the board was as bare as if there had been

nothing on it; but the Orvieto kept the company in good spirits. They began to talk of the lottery which was to be drawn the day after next, and all the girls mentioned the numbers on which they had risked a few bajocchi.

"If I could be sure of one number," said I, "I would stake something on it."

Mariuccia told me that if I wanted a number she could give me one. I laughed at this offer, but in the gravest way she named me the number 27.

"Is the lottery still open?" I asked the Abbé Momolo.

"Till midnight," he replied, "and if you like I will go and get the number for you."

"Here are fifty crowns," said I, "put twenty-five crowns on 27—this for these five young ladies; and the other twenty-five on 27 coming out the fifth number, and this I will keep for myself."

He went out directly and returned with the two tickets.

My pretty neighbour thanked me and said she was sure of winning, but that she did not think I should succeed as it was not probable that 27 would come out fifth.

"I am sure of it," I answered, "for you are the fifth young lady I saw in this house." This made everybody laugh. Momolo's wife told me I would have done much better if I had given the money to the poor, but her husband told her to be quiet, as she did

not know my intent. My brother laughed, and told me I had done a foolish thing. "I do, sometimes," said I, "but we shall see how it turns out, and when one plays one is obliged either to win or lose."

I managed to squeeze my fair neighbour's hand, and she returned the pressure with all her strength. From that time I knew that my fate with Mariuccia was sealed. I left them at midnight, begging the worthy Momolo to ask me again in two days' time, that we might rejoice together over our gains. On our way home my brother said I had either become as rich as Croesus or had gone mad. I told him that both suppositions were incorrect, but that Mariuccia was as handsome as an angel, and he agreed.

Next day Mengs returned to Rome, and I supped with him and his family. He had an exceedingly ugly sister, who for all that, was a good and talented woman. She had fallen deeply in love with my brother, and it was easy to see that the flame was not yet extinguished, but whenever she spoke to him, which she did whenever she could get an opportunity, he looked another way.

She was an exquisite painter of miniatures, and a capital hand at catching a likeness. To the best of my belief she is still living at Rome with Maroni her husband. She often used to speak of my brother to me, and one day she said that he must be the most thankless of men or he would not despise her so. I

was not curious enough to enquire what claim she had to his gratitude.

Mengs's wife was a good and pretty woman, attentive to her household duties and very submissive to her husband, though she could not have loved him, for he was anything but amiable. He was obstinate and fierce in his manner, and when he dined at home he made a point of not leaving the table before he was drunk; out of his own house he was temperate to the extent of not drinking anything but water. His wife carried her obedience so far as to serve as his model for all the nude figures he painted. I spoke to her one day about this unpleasant obligation, and she said that her confessor had charged her to fulfil it, "for," said he, "if your husband has another woman for model he will be sure to enjoy her before painting her, and that sin would be laid to your charge."

After supper, Winckelmann, who was as far gone as all the other male guests, played with Mengs's children. There was nothing of the pedant about this philosopher; he loved children and young people, and his cheerful disposition made him delight in all kinds of enjoyment.

Next day, as I was going to pay my court to the Pope, I saw Momolo in the first ante-chamber, and I took care to remind him of the polenta for the evening.

As soon as the Pope saw me, he said,——

"The Venetian ambassador has informed us

that if you wish to return to your native land, you must go and present yourself before the secretary of the Tribunal."

"Most Holy Father, I am quite ready to take this step, if Your Holiness will grant me a letter of commendation written with your own hand. Without this powerful protection I should never dream of exposing myself to the risk of being again shut up in a place from which I escaped by a miracle and the help of the Almighty."

"You are gaily dressed; you do not look as if you were going to church."

"True, most Holy Father, but neither am I going to a ball."

"We have heard all about the presents being sent back. Confess that you did so to gratify your pride."

"Yes, but also to lower a pride greater than mine."

The Pope smiled at this reply, and I knelt down and begged him to permit me to present the volume of Pandects to the Vatican Library. By way of reply he gave me his blessing, which signifies, in papal language, "Rise; your request is granted."

"We will send you," said he, "a mark of our *singular affection* for you without your having to pay any fees."

A second blessing bid me begone. I have often felt what a good thing it would be if this kind of

dismissal could be employed in general society to send away importunate petitioners, to whom one does not dare say, "Begone."

I was extremely curious to know what the Pope had meant by "a mark of our singular affection." I was afraid that it would be a blessed rosary, with which I should not have known what to do.

When I got home I sent the book by Costa to the Vatican, and then I went to dine with Mengs. While we were eating the soup the winning numbers from the lottery were brought in. My brother glanced at them and looked at me with astonishment. I was not thinking of the subject at that moment, and his gaze surprised me.

"Twenty-seven," he cried, "came out fifth."

"All the better," said I, "we shall have some amusement out of it."

I told the story to Mengs, who said,——

"It's a lucky folly for you this time; but it always is a folly."

He was quite right, and I told him that I agreed with him; but I added that to make a worthy use of the fifteen hundred Roman crowns which fortune had given me, I should go and spend fifteen days at Naples.

"I will come too," said the Abbé Alfani. "I will pass for your secretary."

"With all my heart," I answered, "I shall keep you to your word."

I asked Winckelmann to come and eat polenta with the *scopatore santissimo*, and told my brother to shew him the way; and I then called on the Marquis Belloni, my banker, to look into my accounts, and to get a letter of credit on the firm at Naples, who were his agents. I still had two hundred thousand francs: I had jewellery worth thirty thousand francs, and fifty thousand florins at Amsterdam.

I got to Momolo's in the dusk of the evening, and I found Winckelmann and my brother already there; but instead of mirth reigning round the board I saw sad faces on all sides.

"What's the matter with the girls?" I asked Momolo.

"They are vexed that you did not stake for them in the same way as you did for yourself."

"People are never satisfied. If I had staked for them as I did for myself, and the number had come out first instead of fifth, they would have got nothing, and they would have been vexed then. Two days ago they had nothing, and now that they have twenty-seven crowns apiece they ought to be contented."

"That's just what I tell them, but all women are the same."

"And men too, dear countryman, unless they are philosophers. Gold does not spell happiness, and

mirth can only be found in hearts devoid of care. Let us say no more about it, but be happy."

Costa placed a basket containing ten packets of sweets upon the table.

"I will distribute them," said I, "when everybody is here."

On this, Momolo's second daughter told me that Mariuccia and her mother were not coming, but that they would send them the sweets.

"Why are they not coming?"

"They had a quarrel yesterday," said the father, "and Mariuccia, who was in the right, went away saying that she would never come here again."

"You ungrateful girls!" said I, to my host's daughters, "don't you know that it is to her that you owe your winnings, for she gave me the number twenty-seven, which I should never have thought of. Quick! think of some way to make her come, or I will go away and take all the sweets with me."

"You are quite right," said Momolo.

The mortified girls looked at one another and begged their father to fetch her.

"No," said he, "that won't do; you made her say that she would never come here again, and you must make up the quarrel."

They held a short consultation, and then, asking Costa to go with them, they went to fetch her.

In half an hour they returned in triumph, and Costa was quite proud of the part he had taken in

the reconciliation. I then distributed the sweets, taking care to give the two best packets to the fair Mary.

A noble polenta was placed upon the board, flanked by two large dishes of pork chops. But Momolo, who knew my tastes, and whom I had made rich in the person of his daughters, added to the feast some delicate dishes and some excellent wine. Mariuccia was simply dressed, but her elegance and beauty and the modesty of her demeanour completely seduced me.

We could only express our mutual flames by squeezing each other's hands; and she did this so feelingly that I could not doubt her love. As we were going out I took care to go downstairs beside her and asked if I could not meet her by herself, to which she replied by making an appointment with me for the next day at eight o'clock at the Trinity of Monti.

Mariuccia was tall and shapely, a perfect picture, as fair as a white rose, and calculated to inspire voluptuous desires. She had beautiful light brown hair, dark blue eyes, and exquisitely arched eyelids. Her mouth, the vermilion of her lips, and her ivory teeth were all perfect. Her well-shaped forehead gave her an air approaching the majestic. Kindness and gaiety sparkled in her eyes; while her plump white hands, her rounded finger-tips, her pink nails, her breast, which the corset seemed scarcely able to

restrain, her dainty feet, and her prominent hips, made her worthy of the chisel of Praxiteles. She was just on her eighteenth year, and so far had escaped the connoisseurs. By a lucky chance I came across her in a poor and wretched street, and I was fortunate enough to insure her happiness.

It may easily be believed that I did not fail to keep the appointment, and when she was sure I had seen her she went out of the church. I followed her at a considerable distance: she entered a ruined building, and I after her. She climbed a flight of steps which seemed to be built in air, and when she had reached the top she turned.

"No one will come and look for me here," said she, "so we can talk freely together."

I sat beside her on a stone, and I then declared my passionate love for her.

"Tell me," I added, "what I can do to make you happy; for I wish to possess you, but first to shew my deserts."

"Make me happy, and I will yield to your desires, for I love you."

"Tell me what I can do."

"You can draw me out of the poverty and misery which overwhelm me. I live with my mother, who is a good woman, but devout to the point of superstition; she will damn my soul in her efforts to save it. She finds fault with my keeping myself clean, because I have to touch myself when I wash,

and that might give rise to evil desires. If you had given me the money you made me win in the lottery as a simple alms she would have made me refuse it, because you might have had intentions. She allows me to go by myself to mass because our confessor told her she might do so; but I dare not stay away a minute beyond the time, except on feast days, when I am allowed to pray in the church for two or three hours. We can only meet here, but if you wish to soften my lot in life you can do so as follows:

“A fine young man, who is a hairdresser, and bears an excellent character, saw me at Momolo’s a fortnight ago, and met me at the church door next day and gave me a letter. He declared himself my lover, and said that if I could bring him a dowry of four hundred crowns, he could open a shop, furnish it, and marry me.

“‘I am poor,’ I answered, ‘and I have only a hundred crowns in charity tickets, which my confessor keeps for me.’ Now I have two hundred crowns, for if I marry, my mother will willingly give me her share of the money you made us gain. You can therefore make me happy by getting me tickets to the amount of two hundred crowns more. Take the tickets to my confessor, who is a very good man and fond of me; he will not say anything to my mother about it.”

“I needn’t go about seeking for charity tickets, my angel. I will take two hundred piastres to your

confessor to-morrow, and you must manage the rest yourself. Tell me his name, and tomorrow I will tell you what I have done, but not here, as the wind and the cold would be the death of me. You can leave me to find out a room where we shall be at our ease, and without any danger of people suspecting that we have spent an hour together. I will meet you at the church to-morrow at the same hour, and when you see me follow me."

Mariuccia told me her confessor's name, and allowed me all the caresses possible in our uncomfortable position. The kisses she gave me in return for mine left no doubt in my mind as to her love for me. As nine o'clock struck I left her, perishing with cold, but burning with desire; my only thought being where to find a room in which I might possess myself of the treasure the next day.

On leaving the ruined palace, instead of returning to the Piazza di Spagna I turned to the left and passed along a narrow and dirty street only inhabited by people of the lowest sort. As I slowly walked along, a woman came out of her house and asked me politely if I were looking for anybody.

"I am looking for a room to let."

"There are none here, sir, but you will find a hundred in the square."

"I know it, but I want the room to be here, not for the sake of the expense, but that I may be sure of being able to spend an hour or so of a morning

with a person in whom I am interested. I am ready to pay anything."

"I understand what you mean, and you should have a room in my house if I had one to spare, but a neighbour of mine has one on the ground floor, and if you will wait a moment I will go and speak to her."

"You will oblige me very much."

"Kindly step in here."

I entered a poor room, where all seemed wretchedness, and I saw two children doing their lessons. Soon after, the good woman came back and asked me to follow her. I took several pieces of money from my pocket, and put them down on the only table which this poor place contained. I must have seemed very generous, for the poor mother came and kissed my hand with the utmost gratitude. So pleasant is it to do good, that now when I have nothing left the remembrance of the happiness I have given to others at small cost is almost the only pleasure I enjoy.

I went to a neighbouring house where a woman received me in an empty room, which she told me she would let cheaply if I would pay three months in advance, and bring in my own furniture.

"What do you ask for the three months' rent?"

"Three Roman crowns."

"If you will see to the furnishing of the room this very day I will give you twelve crowns."

"Twelve crowns! What furniture do you want?"

"A good clean bed, a small table covered with a clean cloth, four good chairs, and a large brazier with plenty of fire in it, for I am nearly perishing of cold here. I shall only come occasionally in the morning, and I shall leave by noon at the latest."

"Come at three o'clock, then, to-day, and you will find everything to your satisfaction."

From there I went to the confessor. He was a French monk, about sixty, a fine and benevolent-looking man, who won one's respect and confidence.

"Reverend father," I began, "I saw at the house of Abbé Momolo, *scopatore santissimo*, a young girl named Mary, whose confessor you are. I fell in love with her, and offered her money to try and seduce her. She replied that instead of trying to lead her into sin I would do better to get her some charity tickets that she might be able to marry a young man who loved her, and would make her happy. I was touched by what she said, but my passion still remained. I spoke to her again, and said that I would give her two hundred crowns for nothing, and that her mother should keep them.

"That would be my ruin,' said she; 'my mother would think the money was the price of sin, and would not accept it. If you are really going to be so generous, take the money to my confessor, and ask him to do what he can for my marriage.'

"Here, then, reverend father, is the sum of money for the good girl; be kind enough to take

charge of it, and I will trouble her no more. I am going to Naples the day after to-morrow, and I hope when I come back she will be married."

The good confessor took the hundred sequins and gave me a receipt, telling me that in interesting myself on behalf of Mariuccia I was making happy a most pure and innocent dove, whom he had confessed since she was five years old, and that he had often told her that she might communicate without making her confession because he knew she was incapable of mortal sin.

"Her mother," he added, "is a sainted woman, and as soon as I have enquired into the character of the future husband I will soon bring the marriage about. No one shall ever know from whom this generous gift comes."

After putting this matter in order I dined with the Chevalier Mengs, and I willingly consented to go with the whole family to the Aliberti Theatre that evening. I did not forget, however, to go and inspect the room I had taken. I found all my orders executed, and I gave twelve crowns to the landlady and took the key, telling her to light the fire at seven every morning.

So impatient did I feel for the next day to come that I thought the opera detestable, and the night for me was a sleepless one.

Next morning I went to the church before the time, and when Mariuccia came, feeling sure that

she had seen me, I went out. She followed me at a distance, and when I got to the door of the lodging I turned for her to be sure that it was I, and then went in and found the room well warmed. Soon after Mariuuccia came in, looking timid, confused, and as if she were doubtful of the path she was treading. I clasped her to my arms, and reassured her by my tender embraces; and her courage rose when I shewed her the confessor's receipt, and told her that the worthy man had promised to care for her marriage. She kissed my hand in a transport of delight, assuring me that she would never forget my kindness. Then, as I urged her to make me a happy man, she said,——

“We have three hours before us, as I told my mother I was going to give thanks to God for having made me a winner in the lottery.”

This reassured me, and I took my time, undressing her by degrees, and unveiling her charms one by one, to my delight, without the slightest attempt at resistance on her part. All the time she kept her eyes fixed on mine, as if to soothe her modesty; but when I beheld and felt all her charms I was in an ecstasy. What a body! What beauties! Nowhere was there the slightest imperfection. She was like Venus rising from the foam of the sea. I carried her gently to the bed, and while she strove to hide her alabaster breasts and the soft hair which marked the entrance to the sanctuary, I undressed

in haste, and consummated the sweetest of sacrifices, without there being the slightest doubt in my mind of the purity of the victim. In the first sacrifice no doubt the young priestess felt some pain, but she assured me out of delicacy that she had not been hurt, and at the second assault she shewed that she shared my flames. I was going to immolate the victim for the third time when the clock struck ten. She began to be restless, and we hurriedly put on our clothes. I had to go to Naples, but I assured her that the desire of embracing her once more before her marriage would hasten my return to Rome. I promised to take another hundred crowns to her confessor, advising her to spend the money she had won in the lottery on her trousseau.

"I shall be at Momolo's to-night, dearest, and you must come, too; but we must appear indifferent to each other, though our hearts be full of joy, lest those malicious girls suspect our mutual understanding."

"It is all the more necessary to be cautious," she replied, "as I have noticed that they suspect that we love each other."

Before we parted she thanked me for what I had done for her, and begged me to believe that, her poverty notwithstanding, she had given herself for love alone.

I was the last to leave the house, and I told my landlady that I should be away for ten or twelve

days. I then went to the confessor to give him the hundred crowns I had promised my mistress. When the good old Frenchman heard that I had made this fresh sacrifice that Mariuccia might be able to spend her lottery winnings on her clothes, he told me that he would call on the mother that very day and urge her to consent to her daughter's marriage, and also learn where the young man lived. On my return from Naples I heard that he had faithfully carried out his promise.

I was sitting at table with Mengs when a chamberlain of the Holy Father called. When he came in he asked M. Mengs if I lived there, and on that gentleman pointing me out, he gave me, from his holy master, the Cross of the Order of the Golden Spur with the diploma, and a patent under the pontifical seal, which, in my quality as doctor of laws, made me a prothonotary-apostolic *extra urbem*.

I felt that I had been highly honoured, and told the bearer that I would go and thank my new sovereign and ask his blessing the next day. The Chevalier Mengs embraced me as a brother, but I had the advantage over him in not being obliged to pay anything, whereas the great artist had to disburse twenty-five Roman crowns to have his diploma made out. There is a saying at Rome, *Sine effusione sanguinis non fit remissio*, which may be interpreted, *Nothing without money*; and as a matter of fact, one can do anything with money in the Holy City.

Feeling highly flattered at the favour the Holy

Father had shewn me, I put on the cross which depended from a broad red ribbon—red being the colour worn by the Knights of St. John of the Lateran, the companions of the palace, *comites palatini*, or count-palatins. About the same time poor Cahusac, author of the opera of *Zoroaster*, went mad for joy on the receipt of the same order. I was not so bad as that, but I confess, to my shame, that I was so proud of my decoration that I asked Winckelmann whether I should be allowed to have the cross set with diamonds and rubies. He said I could if I liked, and if I wanted such a cross he could get me one cheap. I was delighted, and bought it to make a show at Naples, but I had not the face to wear it in Rome. When I went to thank the Pope I wore the cross in my button-hole out of modesty. Five years afterwards, when I was at Warsaw, Czartoryski, a Russian prince-palatine, made me leave it off by saying,——

“What are you doing with that wretched bauble? It’s a drug in the market, and no one but an impostor would wear it now.”

The Popes knew this quite well, but they continued to give the cross to ambassadors while they also gave it to their *valets de chambre*. One has to wink at a good many things in Rome.

In the evening Momolo gave me a supper by way of celebrating my new dignity. I recouped him for the expense by holding a bank at faro, at which

I was dexterous enough to lose forty crowns to the family, without having the slightest partiality to Mariuccia who won like the rest. She found the opportunity to tell me that her confessor had called on her, that she had told him where her future husband lived, and that the worthy monk had obtained her mother's consent to the hundred crowns being spent on her trousseau.

I noticed that Momolo's second daughter had taken a fancy to Costa, and I told Momolo that I was going to Naples, but that I would leave my man in Rome, and that if I found a marriage had been arranged on my return I would gladly pay the expenses of the wedding.

Costa liked the girl, but he did not marry her then for fear of my claiming the first-fruits. He was a fool of a peculiar kind, though fools of all sorts are common enough. He married her a year later after robbing me, but I shall speak of that again.

Next day, after I had breakfasted and duly embraced my brother, I set out in a nice carriage with the Abbé Alfani, Le Duc preceding me on horseback, and I reached Naples at a time when everybody was in a state of excitement because an eruption of Vesuvius seemed imminent. At the last stage the inn-keeper made me read the will of his father who had died during the eruption of 1754. He said that in the year 1761 God would overwhelm the sinful town of Naples, and the worthy host con-

sequently advised me to return to Rome. Alfani took the thing seriously, and said that we should do well to be warned by so evident an indication of the will of God. The event was predicted, therefore it had to happen. Thus a good many people reason, but as I was not of the number I proceeded on my way.

CHAPTER IX

MY SHORT BUT HAPPY STAY AT NAPLES—THE
DUKE DE MATALONE—MY DAUGHTER—DONNA LU-
CREZIA—MY DEPARTURE

I SHALL not, dear reader, attempt the impossible, however much I should like to describe the joy, the happiness, I may say the ecstasy, which I experienced in returning to Naples, of which I had such pleasant memories, and where, eighteen years ago, I had made my first fortune in returning from Mataro. As I had come there for the second time to keep a promise I had made to the Duke de Matalone to come and see him at Naples, I ought to have visited this nobleman at once; but foreseeing that from the time I did so I should have little liberty left me, I began by enquiring after all my old friends.

I walked out early in the morning and called on Belloni's agent. He cashed my letter of credit and gave me as many bank-notes as I liked, promising that nobody should know that we did business together. From the bankers I went to see Antonio Casanova, but they told me he lived near Salerno, on an estate he had bought which gave him the title

of marquis. I was vexed, but I had no right to expect to find Naples in the *statu quo* I left it. Polo was dead, and his son lived at St. Lucia with his wife and children; he was a boy when I saw him last, and though I should have much liked to see him again I had no time to do so.

It may be imagined that I did not forget the advocate, Castelli, husband of my dear Lucrezia, whom I had loved so well at Rome and Tivoli. I longed to see her face once more, and I thought of the joy with which we should recall old times that I could never forget. But Castelli had been dead for some years, and his widow lived at a distance of twenty miles from Naples. I resolved not to return to Rome without embracing her. As to Lelio Caraffa, he was still alive and residing at the Matalone Palace.

I returned, feeling tired with my researches, dressed with care, and drove to the Matalone Palace, where they told me that the duke was at table. I did not care for that but had my name sent in, and the duke came out and did me the honour of embracing me and *thouing* me, and then presented me to his wife, a daughter of the Duke de Bovino, and to the numerous company at table. I told him I had only come to Naples in fulfilment of the promise I had made him at Paris.

"Then," said he, "you must stay with me;" and, without waiting for my answer, ordered my

luggage to be brought from the inn, and my carriage to be placed in his coach-house. I accepted his invitation.

One of the guests, a fine-looking man, on hearing my name announced, said gaily,—

“If you bear my name, you must be one of my father’s bastards.”

“No,” said I, directly, “one of your mother’s.”

This repartee made everybody laugh, and the gentleman who had addressed me came and embraced me, not in the least offended. The joke was explained to me. His name was Casalnovi, not Casanova, and he was duke and lord of the fief of that name.

“Did you know,” said the Duke de Matalone, “that I had a son?”

“I was told so, but did not believe it, but now I must do penance for my incredulity, for I see before me an angel capable of working this miracle.”

The duchess blushed, but did not reward my compliment with so much as a glance; but all the company applauded what I had said, as it was notorious that the duke had been impotent before his marriage. The duke sent for his son, I admired him, and told the father that the likeness was perfect. A merry monk, who sat at the right hand of the duchess, said, more truthfully, that there was no likeness at all. He had scarcely uttered the words when the

duchess coolly gave him a box on the ear, which the monk received with the best grace imaginable.

I talked away to the best of my ability, and in half an hour's time I had won everybody's good graces, with the exception of the duchess, who remained inflexible. I tried to make her talk for two days without success; so as I did not care much about her I left her to her pride.

As the duke was taking me to my room he noticed my Spaniard, and asked where my secretary was, and when he saw that it was the Abbé Alfani, who had taken the title so as to escape the notice of the Neapolitans, he said,——

“The abbé is very wise, for he has deceived so many people with his false antiques that he might have got into trouble.”

He took me to his stables where he had some superb horses, Arabs, English, and Andalusians; and then to his gallery, a very fine one; to his large and choice library; and at last to his study, where he had a fine collection of prohibited books.

I was reading titles and turning over leaves, when the duke said,——

“Promise to keep the most absolute secrecy on what I am going to shew you.”

I promised, without making any difficulty, but I expected a surprise of some sort. He then shewed me a satire which I could not understand, but which

was meant to turn the whole Court into ridicule. Never was there a secret so easily kept.

"You must come to the St. Charles Theatre," said he, "and I will present you to the handsomest ladies in Naples, and afterwards you can go when you like, as my box is always open to my friends. I will also introduce you to my mistress, and she, I am sure, will always be glad to see you."

"What! you have a mistress, have you?"

"Yes, but only for form's sake, as I am very fond of my wife. All the same, I am supposed to be deeply in love with her, and even jealous, as I never introduce anyone to her, and do not allow her to receive any visitors."

"But does not your young and handsome duchess object to your keeping a mistress?"

"My wife could not possibly be jealous, as she knows that I am impotent—except, of course, with her."

"I see, but it seems strange; can one be said to have a mistress whom one does not love?"

"I did not say I loved her not; on the contrary, I am very fond of her; she has a keen and pleasant wit, but she interests my head rather than my heart."

"I see; but I suppose she is ugly?"

"Ugly? You shall see her to-night, and you can tell me what you think of her afterwards. She is a handsome and well-educated girl of seventeen."

"Can she speak French?"

"As well as a Frenchwoman."

"I am longing to see her."

When we got to the theatre I was introduced to several ladies, but none of them pleased me. The king, a mere boy, sat in his box in the middle of the theatre, surrounded by his courtiers, richly but tastefully dressed. The pit was full and the boxes also. The latter were ornamented with mirrors, and on that occasion were all illuminated for some reason or other. It was a magnificent scene, but all this glitter and light put the stage into the background.

After we had gazed for some time at the scene, which is almost peculiar to Naples, the duke took me to his private box and introduced me to his friends, who consisted of all the wits in the town.

I have often laughed on hearing philosophers declare that the intelligence of a nation is not so much the result of the climate as of education. Such sages should be sent to Naples and then to St. Petersburg, and be told to reflect, or simply to look before them. If the great Boerhaave had lived at Naples he would have learnt more about the nature of sulphur by observing its effects on vegetables, and still more on animals. In Naples, and Naples alone, water, and nothing but water, will cure diseases which are fatal elsewhere, despite the doctors' efforts.

The duke, who had left me to the wits for a short time, returned and took me to the box of his

mistress, who was accompanied by an old lady of respectable appearance. As he went in he said,——

“Leonilda mia, ti presento il cavalier Don Giacomo Casanova, Veneziano, amico mio.”

She received me kindly and modestly, and stopped listening to the music to talk to me.

When a woman is pretty, one recognizes her charms instantaneously; if one has to examine her closely, her beauty is doubtful. Leonilda was strikingly beautiful. I smiled and looked at the duke, who had told me that he loved her like a daughter, and that he only kept her for form’s sake. He understood the glance, and said,——

“You may believe me.”

“It’s credible,” I replied.

Leonilda no doubt understood what we meant, and said, with a shy smile,——

“Whatever is possible is credible.”

“Quite so,” said I, “but one may believe, or not believe, according to the various degrees of possibility.”

“I think it’s easier to believe than to disbelieve. You came to Naples yesterday; that’s true and yet incredible.”

“Why incredible?”

“Would any man suppose that a stranger would come to Naples at a time when the inhabitants are wishing themselves away?”

“Indeed, I have felt afraid till this moment, but

now I feel quite at my ease, since, you being here, St. Januarius will surely protect Naples."

"Why?"

"Because I am sure he loves you; but you are laughing at me."

"It is such a funny idea. I am afraid that if I had a lover like St. Januarius I should not grant him many favours."

"Is he very ugly, then?"

"If his portrait is a good likeness, you can see for yourself by examining his statue."

Gaiety leads to freedom, and freedom to friendship. Mental graces are superior to bodily charms.

Leonilda's frankness inspired my confidence, and I led the conversation to love, on which she talked like a past mistress.

"Love," said she, "unless it leads to the possession of the beloved object, is a mere torment; if bounds are placed to passion, love must die."

"You are right; and the enjoyment of a beautiful object is not a true pleasure unless it be preceded by love."

"No doubt if love precedes it accompanies, but I do not think it necessarily follows, enjoyment."

"True, it often makes love to cease."

"She is a selfish daughter, then, to kill her father; and if after enjoyment love still continue in the heart of one, it is worse than murder, for the

party in which love still survives must needs be wretched."

"You are right; and from your strictly logical arguments I conjecture that you would have the senses kept in subjection: that is too hard!"

"I would have nothing to do with that Platonic affection devoid of love, but I leave you to guess what my maxim would be."

"To love and enjoy; to enjoy and love. Turn and turn about."

"You have hit the mark."

With this Leonilda burst out laughing, and the duke kissed her hand. Her governess, not understanding French, was attending to the opera, but I was in flames.

Leonilda was only seventeen, and was as pretty a girl as the heart could desire.

The duke repeated a lively epigram of Lafontaine's on "Enjoyment," which is only found in the first edition of his works. It begins as follows:

*"La jouissance et les désirs
Sont ce que l'homme a de plus rare;
Mais ce ne sont pas vrais plaisirs
Dès le moment qu'on les sépare."*

I have translated this epigram into Italian and Latin; in the latter language I was almost able to render Lafontaine line for line; but I had to use twenty lines of Italian to translate the first ten lines

of the French. Of course this argues nothing as to the superiority of the one language over the other.

In the best society at Naples one addresses a new-comer in the second person singular as a peculiar mark of distinction. This puts both parties at their ease without diminishing their mutual respect for one another.

Leonilda had already turned my first feeling of admiration into something much warmer, and the opera, which lasted for five hours, seemed over in a moment.

After the two ladies had gone the duke said, "Now we must part, unless you are fond of games of chance."

"I don't object to them when I am to play with good hands."

"Then follow me; ten or twelve of my friends will play faro, and then sit down to a cold collation, but I warn you it is a secret, as gaming is forbidden. I will answer for you keeping your own counsel, however."

"You may do so."

He took me to the Duke de Monte Leone's. We went up to the third floor, passed through a dozen rooms, and at last reached the gamester's chamber. A polite-looking banker, with a bank of about four hundred sequins, had the cards in his hands. The duke introduced me as his friend, and made me sit beside him. I was going to draw out my purse, but

I was told that debts were not paid for twenty-four hours after they were due. The banker gave me a pack of cards, with a little basket containing a thousand counters. I told the company that I should consider each counter as a Naples ducat. In less than two hours my basket was empty. I stopped playing and proceeded to enjoy my supper. It was arranged in the Neapolitan style, and consisted of an enormous dish of macaroni and ten or twelve different kinds of shell fish which are plentiful on the Neapolitan coasts. When we left I took care not to give the duke time to condole with me on my loss, but began to talk to him about his delicious Leonilda.

Early next day he sent a page to my room to tell me that if I wanted to come with him and kiss the king's hand I must put on my gala dress. I put on a suit of rose-coloured velvet, with gold spangles, and I had the great honour of kissing a small hand, covered with chilblains, belonging to a boy of nine. The Prince de St. Nicander brought up the young king to the best of his ability, but he was naturally a kindly, just, and generous monarch; if he had had more dignity he would have been an ideal king; but he was too unceremonious, and that, I think, is a defect in one destined to rule others.

I had the honour of sitting next the duchess at dinner, and she deigned to say that she had never seen a finer dress. "That's my way," I said, "of distracting attention from my face and figure." She

smiled, and her politenesses to me during my stay were almost limited to these few words.

When we left the table the duke took me to the apartment occupied by his uncle, Don Lelio, who recognized me directly. I kissed the venerable old man's hand, and begged him to pardon me for the freaks of my youth. "It's eighteen years ago," said he, "since I chose M. Casanova as the companion of your studies." I delighted him by giving him a brief account of my adventures in Rome with Cardinal Acquaviva. As we went out, he begged me to come and see him often.

Towards the evening the duke said,——

"If you go to the Opera Buffa you will please Leonilda."

He gave me the number of her box, and added,——

"I will come for you towards the close, and we will sup together as before."

I had no need to order my horses to be put in, as there was always a carriage ready for me in the courtyard.

When I got to the theatre the opera had begun. I presented myself to Leonilda, who received me with the pleasant words, "Caro Don Giacomo, I am so pleased to see you again."

No doubt she did not like to *thou* me, but the expression of her eyes and the tone of her voice were

much better than the *tu* which is often used lavishly at Naples.

The seductive features of this charming girl were not altogether unknown to me, but I could not recollect of what woman she reminded me. Leonilda was certainly a beauty, and something superior to a beauty, if possible. She had splendid light chestnut hair, and her black and brilliant eyes, shaded by thick lashes, seemed to hear and speak at the same time. But what ravished me still more was her expression, and the exquisite appropriateness of the gestures with which she accompanied what she was saying. It seemed as if her tongue could not give speech to the thoughts which crowded her brain. She was naturally quick-witted, and her intellect had been developed by an excellent education.

The conversation turned upon Lafontaine's epigram, of which I had only recited the first ten verses, as the rest is too licentious; and she said,—

"But I suppose it is only a poet's fancy, at which one could but smile."

"Possibly, but I did not care to wound your ears."

"You are very good," said she, using the pleasant *tu*, "but all the same, I am not so thin-skinned, as I have a closet which the duke has had painted over with couples in various amorous attitudes. We go there sometimes, and I assure you that I do not experience the slightest sensation."

"That may be through a defect of temperament, for whenever I see well-painted voluptuous pictures I feel myself on fire. I wonder that while you and the duke look at them, you do not try to put some of them into practice."

"We have only friendship for one another."

"Let him believe it who will."

"I am sure he is a man, but I am unable to say whether he is able to give a woman any real proofs of his love."

"Yet he has a son."

"Yes, he has a child who calls him father; but he himself confesses that he is only able to shew his manly powers with his wife."

"That's all nonsense, for you are made to give birth to amorous desires, and a man who could live with you without being able to possess you ought to cease to live."

"Do you really think so?"

"Dear Leonilda, if I were in the duke's place I would shew you what a man who really loves can do."

"*Caro Don Giacomo*, I am delighted to hear you love me, but you will soon forget me, as you are leaving Naples."

"Cursed be the gaming-table, for without it we might spend some delightful hours together."

"The duke told me that you lost a thousand

ducats yesterday evening like a perfect gentleman. You must be very unlucky."

"Not always, but when I play on a day in which I have fallen in love I am sure to lose."

"You will win back your money this evening."

"This is the declaration day; I shall lose again."

"Then don't play."

"People would say I was afraid, or that all my money was gone."

"I hope at all events that you will win sometimes, and that you will tell me of your good luck. Come and see me to-morrow with the duke."

The duke came in at that moment, and asked me if I had liked the opera. Leonilda answered for me,—

"We have been talking about love all the time, so we don't know what has been going on the stage."

"You have done well."

"I trust you will bring M. Casanova to see me to-morrow morning, as I hope he will bring me news that he has won."

"It's my turn to deal this evening, dearest, but whether he wins or loses you shall see him to-morrow. You must give us some breakfast."

"I shall be delighted."

We kissed her hand, and went to the same place as the night before. The company was waiting for the duke. There were twelve members of the club, and they all held the bank in turn. They said that

this made the chances more equal; but I laughed at this opinion, as there is nothing more difficult to establish than equality between players.

The Duke de Matalone sat down, drew out his purse and his pocket-book, and put two thousand ducats in the bank, begging pardon of the others for doubling the usual sum in favour of the stranger. The bank never exceeded a thousand ducats.

"Then," said I, "I will hazard two thousand ducats also and not more, for they say at Venice that a prudent player never risks more than he can win. Each of my counters will be equivalent to two ducats." So saying, I took ten notes of a hundred ducats each from my pocket, and gave them to the last evening's banker who had won them from me.

Play began; and though I was prudent, and only risked my money on a single card, in less than three hours my counters were all gone. I stopped playing, though I had still twenty-five thousand ducats; but I had said that I would not risk more than two thousand, and I was ashamed to go back from my word.

Though I have always felt losing my money, no one has ever seen me put out, my natural gaiety was heightened by art on such occasions, and seemed to be more brilliant than ever. I have always found it a great advantage to be able to lose pleasantly.

I made an excellent supper, and my high spirits furnished me with such a fund of amusing conversa-

tion that all the table was in a roar. I even succeeded in dissipating the melancholy of the Duke de Matalone, who was in despair at having won such a sum from his friend and guest. He was afraid he had half ruined me, and also that people might say he had only welcomed me for the sake of my money.

As we returned to the palace the conversation was affectionate on his side and jovial on mine, but I could see he was in some trouble, and guessed what was the matter. He wanted to say that I could pay the money I owed him whenever I liked, but was afraid of wounding my feelings; but as soon as he got in he wrote me a friendly note to the effect that if I wanted money his banker would let me have as much as I required. I replied directly that I felt the generosity of his offer, and if I was in need of funds I would avail myself of it.

Early next morning I went to his room, and after an affectionate embrace I told him not to forget that we were going to breakfast with his fair mistress. We both put on great coats and went to Leonilda's pretty house.

We found her sitting up in bed, negligently but decently dressed, with a dimity corset tied with red ribbons. She looked beautiful, and her graceful posture added to her charms. She was reading Crébillon's *Sopha*. The duke sat down at the bottom of the bed, and I stood staring at her in speechless admiration, endeavouring to recall to my

memory where I had seen such another face as hers. It seemed to me that I had loved a woman like her. This was the first time I had seen her without the deceitful glitter of candles. She laughed at my absent-mindedness, and told me to sit down on a chair by her bedside.

The duke told her that I was quite pleased at having lost two thousand ducats to his bank, as the loss made me sure she loved me.

"Caro mio Don Giacomo, I am sorry to hear that! You would have done better not to play, for I should have loved you all the same, and you would have been two thousand ducats better off."

"And I two thousand ducats worse off," said the duke, laughing.

"Never mind, dear Leonilda, I shall win this evening if you grant me some favour to-day. If you do not do so, I shall lose heart, and you will mourn at my grave before long."

"Think, Leonilda, what you can do for my friend."

"I don't see that I can do anything."

The duke told her to dress, that we might go and breakfast in the painted closet. She began at once, and preserved a just mean in what she let us see and what she concealed, and thus set me in flames, though I was already captivated by her face, her wit, and her charming manners. I cast an indiscreet glance towards her beautiful breast,

and thus added fuel to the fire. I confess that I only obtained this satisfaction by a species of larceny, but I could not have succeeded if she had not been well disposed towards me. I pretended to have seen nothing.

While dressing she maintained with much ingenuity that a wise girl will be much more chary of her favours towards a man she loves than towards a man she does not love, because she would be afraid to lose the first, whereas she does not care about the second.

"It will not be so with me, charming Leonilda," said I.

"You make a mistake, I am sure."

The pictures with which the closet where we breakfasted was adorned were admirable more from the colouring and the design than from the amorous combats which they represented.

"They don't make any impression on me," said the duke, and he shewed us that it was so.

Leonilda looked away, and I felt shocked, but concealed my feelings.

"I am in the same state as you," said I, "but I will not take the trouble of convincing you."

"That can't be," said he; and passing his hand rapidly over me he assured himself that it was so. "It's astonishing," he cried; "you must be as impotent as I am."

"If I wanted to controvert that assertion one glance into Leonilda's eyes would be enough."

"Look at him, dearest Leonilda, that I may be convinced."

Leonilda looked tenderly at me, and her glance produced the result I had expected.

"Give me your hand," said I, to the poor duke, and he did so.

"I was in the wrong," he exclaimed, but when he endeavoured to bring the surprising object to light I resisted. He persisted in his endeavours, and I determined to play on him a trick. I took Leonilda's hand and pressed my lips to it, and just as the duke thought he had triumphed I besprinkled him, and went off into a roar of laughter. He laughed too, and went to get a napkin.

The girl could see nothing of all this, as it went on under the table; and while my burning lips rested on her hand, my eyes were fixed on hers and our breath mingled. This close contact had enabled me to baptise the duke, but when she took in the joke we made a group worthy of the pen of Aretin.

It was a delightful breakfast, though we passed certain bounds which decency ought to have proscribed to us, but Leonilda was wonderfully innocent considering her position. We ended the scene by mutual embraces, and when I took my burning lips from Leonilda's I felt consumed with a fire which I could not conceal.

When we left I told the duke that I would see his mistress no more, unless he would give her up to me, declaring that I would marry her and give her a dower of five thousand ducats.

"Speak to her, and if she consents I will not oppose it. She herself will tell you what property she has."

I then went to dress for dinner. I found the duchess in the midst of a large circle, and she told me kindly that she was very sorry to hear of my losses.

"Fortune is the most fickle of beings, but I don't complain of my loss—nay, when you speak thus I love it, and I even think that you will make me win this evening."

"I hope so, but I am afraid not; you will have to contend against Monte Leone, who is usually very lucky."

In considering the matter after dinner, I determined for the future to play with ready money and not on my word of honour, lest I should at any time be carried away by the excitement of play and induced to stake more than I possessed. I thought, too, that the banker might have his doubts after the two heavy losses I had sustained, and I confess that I was also actuated by the gambler's superstition that by making a change of any kind one changes the luck.

I spent four hours at the theatre in Leonilda's

box, where I found her more gay and charming than I had seen her before.

"Dear Leonilda," I said, "the love I feel for you will suffer no delay and no rivals, not even the slightest inconstancy. I have told the duke that I am ready to marry you, and that I will give you a dower of five thousand ducats."

"What did he say?"

"That I must ask you, and that he would offer no opposition."

"Then we should leave Naples together."

"Directly, dearest, and thenceforth death alone would part us."

"We will talk of it to-morrow, dear Don Giacomo, and if I can make you happy I am sure you will do the same by me."

As she spoke these delightful words the duke came in.

"Don Giacomo and I are talking of marrying," said she.

"Marriage, *mia carissima*," he replied, "ought to be well considered beforehand."

"Yes, when one has time; but my dear Giacomo cannot wait, and we shall have plenty of time to think it over afterwards."

"As you are going to marry," said the duke, "you can put off your departure, or return after the wedding."

"I can neither put it off nor return, my dear

duke. We have made up our minds, and if we repent we have plenty of time before us."

He laughed and said we would talk it over next day. I gave my future bride a kiss which she returned with ardour, and the duke and I went to the club, where we found the Duke de Monte Leone dealing.

"My lord," said I, "I am unlucky playing on my word of honour, so I hope you will allow me to stake money."

"Just as you please; it comes to the same thing, but don't trouble yourself. I have made a bank of four thousand ducats that you may be able to recoup yourself for your losses."

"Thanks, I promise to break it or to lose as much."

I drew out six thousand ducats, gave two thousand ducats to the Duke de Matalone, and began to punt at a hundred ducats. After a short time the duke left the table, and I finally succeeded in breaking the bank. I went back to the place by myself, and when I told the duke of my victory the next day, he embraced me with tears of joy, and advised me to stake money for the future.

As the Princess de Vale was giving a great supper, there was no play that evening. This was some respite. We called on Leonilda, and putting off talking of our marriage till the day after we spent the time in viewing the wonders of nature

around Naples. In the evening I was introduced by a friend at the princess's supper, and saw all the highest nobility of the place.

Next morning the duke told me that he had some business to do, and that I had better go and see Leonilda, and that he would call for me later on. I went to Leonilda, but as the duke did not put in an appearance we could not settle anything about our marriage. I spent several hours with her, but I was obliged to obey her commands, and could only shew myself amorous in words. Before leaving I repeated that it only rested with her to unite our lives by indissoluble ties, and to leave Naples almost immediately.

When I saw the duke he said,—

“Well, Don Giacomo, you have spent all the morning with my mistress; do you still wish to marry her?”

“More than ever; what do you mean?”

“Nothing; and as you have passed this trial to which I purposely subjected you, we will discuss your union to-morrow, and I hope you will make this charming woman happy, for she will be an excellent wife.”

“I agree with you.”

When we went to Monte Leone's in the evening, we saw a banker with a good deal of gold before him. The duke told me he was Don Marco Ottoboni. He was a fine-looking man, but he held the cards so

closely together in his left hand that I could not see them. This did not inspire me with confidence, so I only punted a ducat at a time. I was persistently unlucky, but I only lost a score of ducats. After five or six deals the banker asked me politely why I staked such small sums against him.

"Because I can't see half the pack," I replied, "and I am afraid of losing."

Some of the company laughed at my answer.

Next night I broke the bank held by the Prince the Cassaro, a pleasant and rich nobleman, who asked me to give him revenge, and invited me to supper at his pretty house at Posilipo, where he lived with a virtuosa of whom he had become amorous at Palermo. He also invited the Duke de Matalone and three or four other gentlemen. This was the only occasion on which I held the bank while I was at Naples, and I staked six thousand ducats after warning the prince that as it was the eve of my departure I should only play for ready money.

He lost ten thousand ducats, and only rose from the table because he had no more money. Everybody left the room, and I should have done the same if the prince's mistress had not owed me a hundred ducats. I continued to deal in the hope that she would get her money back, but seeing that she still lost I put down the cards, and told her that she must pay me at Rome. She was a handsome and agree-

able woman, but she did not inspire me with any passions, no doubt because my mind was occupied with another, otherwise I should have drawn a bill on sight, and paid myself without meddling with her purse. It was two o'clock in the morning when I got to bed.

Both Leonilda and myself wished to see Caserta before leaving Naples, and the duke sent us there in a carriage drawn by six mules, which went faster than most horses. Leonilda's governess accompanied us.

The day after, we settled the particulars of our marriage in a conversation which lasted for two hours.

"Leonilda," began the duke, "has a mother, who lives at a short distance from here, on an income of six hundred ducats, which I have given her for life, in return for an estate belonging to her husband; but Leonilda does not depend on her. She gave her up to me seven years ago, and I have given her an annuity of five hundred ducats, which she will bring to you, with all her diamonds and an extensive trousseau. Her mother gave her up to me entirely, and I gave my word of honour to get her a good husband. I have taken peculiar care of her education, and as her mind has developed I have put her on her guard against all prejudices, with the exception of that which bids a woman keep herself intact for her future husband. You may rest assured that you

are the first man whom Leonilda (who is a daughter to me) has pressed to her heart."

I begged the duke to get the contract ready, and to add to her dower the sum of five thousand ducats, which I would give him when the deed was signed.

"I will mortgage them," said he, "on a house which is worth double."

Then turning to Leonilda, who was shedding happy tears, he said,——

"I am going to send for your mother, who will be delighted to sign the settlement, and to make the acquaintance of your future husband."

The mother lived at the Marquis Galiani's, a day's journey from Naples. The duke said he would send a carriage for her the next day, and that we could all sup together the day after.

"The law business will be all done by then, and we shall be able to go to the little church at Portici, and the priest will marry you. Then we will take your mother to St. Agatha and dine with her, and you can go your way with her maternal blessing."

This conclusion gave me an involuntary shudder, and Leonilda fell fainting in the duke's arms. He called her dear child, cared for her tenderly, and brought her to herself.

We all had to wipe our eyes, as we were all equally affected.

I considered myself as a married man and under obligation to alter my way of living, and I stopped playing. I had won more than fifteen thousand ducats, and this sum added to what I had before and Leonilda's dowry should have sufficed for an honest livelihood.

Next day, as I was at supper with the duke and Leonilda, she said,—

“What will my mother say to-morrow evening, when she sees you?”

“She will say that you are silly to marry a stranger whom you have only known for a week. Have you told her my name, my nation, my condition, and my age?”

“I wrote to her as follows:

“‘Dear mamma, come directly and sign my marriage contract with a gentleman introduced to me by the duke, with whom I shall be leaving for Rome on Monday next.’”

“My letter ran thus,” said the duke:

“‘Come without delay, and sign your daughter's marriage contract, and give her your blessing. She has wisely chosen a husband old enough to be her father; he is a friend of mine.’”

“That's not true,” cried Leonilda, rushing to my arms, “she will think you are really old, and I am sorry.”

“Is your mother an elderly woman?”

"She's a charming woman," said the duke, "full of wit, and not thirty-eight yet."

"What has she got to do with Galiani?"

"She is an intimate friend of the marchioness's, and she lives with the family but pays for her board."

Next morning, having some business with my banker to attend to, I told the duke that I should not be able to see Leonilda till supper-time. I went there at eight o'clock and I found the three sitting in front of the fire.

"Here he is!" cried the duke.

As soon as the mother saw me she screamed and fell nearly fainting on a chair. I looked at her fixedly for a minute, and exclaimed,—

"Donna Lucrezia! I am fortunate indeed!"

"Let us take breath, my dear friend. Come and sit by me. So you are going to marry my daughter, are you?"

I took a chair and guessed it all. My hair stood on end, and I relapsed into a gloomy silence.

The stupefied astonishment of Leonilda and the duke cannot be described. They could see that Donna Lucrezia and I knew each other, but they could not get any farther. As for myself, as I pondered gloomily and compared Leonilda's age with the period at which I had been intimate with Lucrezia Castelli, I could see that it was quite possible that she might be my daughter; but I told myself that the mother could not be certain of the fact, as at the time she

lived with her husband, who was very fond of her and not fifty years of age. I could bear the suspense no longer, so, taking a light and begging Leonilda and the duke to excuse me, I asked Lucrezia to come into the next room with me.

As soon as she was seated, she drew me to her and said,——

“Must I grieve my dear one whom I have loved so well? Leonilda is your daughter, I am certain of it. I always looked upon her as your daughter, and my husband knew it, but far from being angry, he used to adore her. I will shew you the register of her birth, and you can calculate for yourself. My husband was at Rome, and did not see me once, and my daughter did not come before her time. You must remember a letter which my mother should have given you, in which I told you I was with child. That was in January, 1744, and in six months my daughter will be seventeen. My late husband gave her the names of Leonilda Giacomina at the baptismal font, and when he played with her he always called her by the latter name. This idea of your marrying her horrifies me, but I cannot oppose it, as I am ashamed to tell the reason. What do you think? Have you still the courage to marry her? You seem to hesitate. Have you taken any earnest of the marriage-bed?”

“No, dear Lucrezia, your daughter is as pure as a lily.”

"I breathe again."

"Ah, yes! but my heart is torn asunder."

"I am grieved to see you thus."

"She has no likeness to me."

"That proves nothing; she has taken after me. You are weeping, dearest, you will break my heart."

"Who would not weep in my place? I will send the duke to you; he must know all."

I left Lucrezia, and I begged the duke to go and speak to her. The affectionate Leonilda came and sat on my knee, and asked me what the dreadful mystery was. I was too much affected to be able to answer her; she kissed me, and we began to weep. We remained thus sad and silent till the return of the duke and Donna Lucrezia, who was the only one to keep her head cool.

"Dear Leonilda," said she, "you must be let into the secret of this disagreeable mystery, and your mother is the proper person to enlighten you. Do you remember what name my late husband used to call you when he petted you?"

"He used to call me his charming Giacomina."

"That is M. Casanova's name; it is the name of your father. Go and kiss him; his blood flows in your veins; and if he has been your lover, repent of the crime which was happily quite involuntary."

The scene was a pathetic one, and we were all deeply moved. Leonilda clung to her mother's knees.

and in a voice that struggled with sobs exclaimed,—

“I have only felt what an affectionate daughter might feel for a father.”

At this point silence fell on us, a silence that was only broken by the sobs of the two women, who held each other tightly embraced; while the duke and I sat as motionless as two posts, our heads bent and our hands crossed, without as much as looking at each other.

Supper was served, and we sat at table for three hours, talking sadly over this dramatic recognition, which had brought more grief than joy; and we departed at midnight full of melancholy, and hoping that we should be calmer on the morrow, and able to take the only step that now remained to us.

As we were going away the duke made several observations on what moral philosophers call prejudices. There is no philosopher who would maintain or even advance the thesis that the union of a father and daughter is horrible naturally, for it is entirely a social prejudice; but it is so widespread, and education has graven it so deeply in our hearts, that only a man whose heart is utterly depraved could despise it. It is the result of a respect for the laws, it keeps the social scheme together; in fact, it is no longer a prejudice, it is a principle.

I went to bed, but as usual, after the violent emotion I had undergone, I could not sleep. The

rapid transition from carnal to paternal love cast my physical and mental faculties into such a state of excitement that I could scarcely withstand the fierce struggle that was taking place in my heart.

Towards morning I fell asleep for a short time, and woke up feeling as exhausted as two lovers who have been spending a long and voluptuous winter's night.

When I got up I told the duke that I intended to set out from Naples the next day; and he observed that as everybody knew I was on the eve of my departure, this haste would make people talk.

"Come and have some broth with me," said he; "and from henceforth look upon this marriage project as one of the many pranks in which you have engaged. We will spend the three or four days pleasantly together, and perhaps when we have thought over all this for some time we shall end by thinking it matter for mirth and not sadness. Believe me the mother's as good as the daughter; recollection is often better than hope; console yourself with Lucrezia. I don't think you can see any difference between her present appearance and that of eighteen years ago, for I don't see how she can ever have been handsomer than she is now."

This remonstrance brought me to my senses. I felt that the best thing I could do would be to forget the illusion which had amused me for four or five days, and as my self-esteem was not wounded it

ought not to be a difficult task; but yet I was in love and unable to satisfy my love.

Love is not like merchandise, where one can substitute one thing for another when one cannot have what one wants. Love is a sentiment, only the object who has kindled the flame can soothe the heat thereof.

We went to call on my daughter, the duke in his usual mood, but I looking pale, depressed, weary, and like a boy going to receive the rod. I was extremely surprised when I came into the room to find the mother and daughter quite gay, but this helped on my cure. Leonilda threw her arms round my neck, calling me dear papa, and kissing me with all a daughter's freedom. Donna Lucrezia stretched out her hand, addressing me as her dear friend. I regarded her attentively, and I was forced to confess that the eighteen years that had passed away had done little ill to her charms. There was the same sparkling glance, that fresh complexion, those perfect shapes, those beautiful lips—in fine, all that had charmed my youthful eyes.

We mutely caressed each other. Leonilda gave and received the tenderest kisses without seeming to notice what desires she might cause to arise; no doubt she knew that as her father I should have strength to resist, and she was right. One gets used to everything, and I was ashamed to be sad any longer.

I told Donna Lucrezia of the curious welcome

her sister had given me in Rome, and she went off into peals of laughter. We reminded each other of the night at Tivoli, and these recollections softened our hearts. From these softened feelings to love is but a short way; but neither place nor time were convenient, so we pretended not to be thinking of it.

After a few moments of silence I told her that if she cared to come to Rome with me to pay a visit to her sister Angélique, I would take her back to Naples at the beginning of Lent. She promised to let me know whether she could come on the following day.

I sat between her and Leonilda at dinner; and as I could no longer think of the daughter, it was natural that my old flame for Lucrezia should rekindle; and whether from the effect of her gaiety and beauty, or from my need of someone to love, or from the excellence of the wine, I found myself in love with her by the dessert, and asked her to take the place which her daughter was to have filled.

"I will marry you," said I, "and we will all of us go to Rome on Monday, for since Leonilda is my daughter I do not like to leave her at Naples."

At this the three guests looked at each other and said nothing. I did not repeat my proposal, but led the conversation to some other topic.

After dinner I felt sleepy and lay down on a bed, and did not wake till eight o'clock, when to my surprise I found that my only companion was Lu-

crezia, who was writing. She heard me stir, and came up to me and said affectionately,—

“My dear friend, you have slept for five hours; and as I did not like to leave you alone I would not go with the duke and our daughter to the opera.”

The memory of former loves awakens when one is near the once beloved object, and desires rapidly become irresistible if the beauty still remain. The lovers feel as if they were once more in possession of a blessing which belongs to them, and of which they have been long deprived by unfortunate incidents. These were our feelings, and without delay, without idle discussion, and above all, without false modesty, we abandoned ourselves to love, the only true source of nature.

In the first interval, I was the first to break the silence; and if a man is anything of a wit, is he the less so at that delicious moment of repose which follows on an amorous victory?

“Once again, then,” said I, “I am in this charming land which I entered for the first time to the noise of the drum and the rattle of musket shots.”

This remark made her laugh, and recalled past events to her memory. We recollected with delight all the pleasures we had enjoyed at Testaccio, Frascati, and Tivoli. We reminded each other of these events, only to make each other laugh; but with two lovers, what is laughter but a pretext for renewing the sweet sacrifice of the goddess of Cythera?

At the end of the second act, full of the enthusiasm of the fortunate lover, I said,—

“Let us be united for life; we are of the same age, we love each other, our means are sufficient for us, we may hope to live a happy life, and to die at the same moment.”

“’Tis the darling wish of my heart,” Lucrezia replied, “but let us stay at Naples and leave Leonilda to the duke. We will see company, find her a worthy husband, and our happiness will be complete.”

“I cannot live at Naples, dearest, and you know that your daughter intended to leave with me.”

“My daughter! Say our daughter. I see that you are still in love with her, and do not wish to be considered her father.”

“Alas, yes! But I am sure that if I live with you my passion for her will be stilled, but otherwise I cannot answer for myself. I shall fly, but flight will not bring me happiness. Leonilda charms me still more by her intelligence than by her beauty. I was sure that she loved me so well that I did not attempt to seduce her, lest thereby I should weaken my hold on her affections; and as I wanted to make her happy I wished to deserve her esteem. I longed to possess her, but in a lawful manner, so that our rights should have been equal. We have created an angel, Lucrezia, and I cannot imagine how the duke . . .”

“The duke is completely impotent. Do you

see now how I was able to trust my daughter to his care?"

"Impotent? I always thought so myself, but he has a son."

"His wife might possibly be able to explain that mystery to you, but you may take it for granted that the poor duke will die a virgin in spite of himself; and he knows that as well as anybody."

"Do not let us say any more about it, but allow me to treat you as at Tivoli."

"Not just now, as I hear carriage wheels."

A moment after the door opened, and Leonilda laughed heartily to see her mother in my arms, and threw herself upon us, covering us with kisses. The duke came in a little later, and we supped together very merrily. He thought me the happiest of men when I told him I was going to pass the night honourably with my wife and daughter; and he was right, for I was so at that moment.

As soon as the worthy man left us we went to bed, but here I must draw a veil over the most voluptuous night I have ever spent. If I told all I should wound chaste ears, and, besides, all the colours of the painter and all the phrases of the poet could not do justice to the delirium of pleasure, the ecstasy, and the license which passed during that night, while two wax lights burnt dimly on the table like candles before the shrine of a saint.

We did not leave the stage, which I watered

with my blood, till long after the sun had risen. We were scarcely dressed when the duke arrived.

Leonilda gave him a vivid description of our nocturnal labours, but in his unhappy state of impotence he must have been thankful for his absence.

I was determined to start the next day so as to be at Rome for the last week of the carnival and I begged the duke to let me give Leonilda the five thousand ducats which would have been her dower if she had become my bride.

"As she is your daughter," said he, "she can and ought to take this present from her father, if only as a dowry for her future husband."

"Will you accept it, then, my dear Leonilda?"

"Yes, papa dear," she said, embracing me, "on the condition that you will promise to come and see me again as soon as you hear of my marriage."

I promised to do so, and I kept my word.

"As you are going to-morrow," said the duke, "I shall ask all the nobility of Naples to meet you at supper. In the meanwhile I leave you with your daughter; we shall see each other again at supper-time."

He went out and I dined with my wife and daughter in the best of spirits. I spent almost the whole afternoon with Leonilda, keeping within the bounds of decency, less, perhaps, out of respect to morality, than because of my labours of the night be-

fore. We did not kiss each other till the moment of parting, and I could see that both mother and daughter were grieved to lose me.

After a careful toilette I went to supper, and found an assembly of a hundred of the very best people in Naples. The duchess was very agreeable, and when I kissed her hand to take leave, she said,——

“I hope, Don Giacomo, that you have had no unpleasantness during your short stay at Naples, and that you will sometimes think of your visit with pleasure.”

I answered that I could only recall my visit with delight after the kindness with which she had deigned to treat me that evening; and, in fact, my recollections of Naples were always of the happiest description.

After I had treated the duke's attendants with generosity, the poor nobleman, whom fortune had favoured, and whom nature had deprived of the sweetest of all enjoyments, came with me to the door of my carriage and I went on my way.

CHAPTER X

MY CARRIAGE BROKEN — MARIUCCIA'S WEDDING —
FLIGHT OF LORD LISMORE — MY RETURN TO
FLORENCE, AND MY DEPARTURE WITH THE
CORTICELLI

My Spaniard was going on before us on horseback, and I was sleeping profoundly beside Don Ciccio Alfani in my comfortable carriage, drawn by four horses, when a violent shock aroused me. The carriage had been overturned on the highway, at midnight, beyond Francolisa and four miles from St. Agatha.

Alfani was beneath me and uttered piercing shrieks, for he thought he had broken his left arm. Le Duc rode back and told me that the postillions had taken flight, possibly to give notice of our mishap to highwaymen, who are very common in the States of the Church and Naples.

I got out of the carriage easily enough, but poor old Alfani, who was unwieldly with fat, badly hurt, and half dead with fright, could not extricate himself without assistance. It took us a quarter of an hour to get him free. The poor wretch amused me by the

blasphemies which he mingled with prayers to his patron saint, St. Francis of Assisi.

I was not without experience of such accidents and was not at all hurt, for one's safety depends a good deal on the position one is in. Don Ciccio had probably hurt his arm by stretching it out just as the accident took place.

I took my sword, my musket, and my horse-pistols out of the carriage, and I made them and my pockets pistols ready so as to offer a stiff resistance to the brigands if they came; and I then told Le Duc to take some money and ride off and see if he could bring some peasants to our assistance.

Don Ciccio groaned over the accident, but I, resolving to sell my money and my life dearly, made a rampart of the carriage and four horses, and stood sentry, with my arms ready.

I then felt prepared for all hazards, and was quite calm, but my unfortunate companion continued to pour forth his groans, and prayers, and blasphemies, for all that goes together at Naples as at Rome. I could do nothing but compassionate him; but in spite of myself I could not help laughing, which seemed to vex the poor abbé, who looked for all the world like a dying dolphin as he rested motionless against the bank. His distress may be imagined, when the nearest horse yielded to the call of nature, and voided over the unfortunate man the

contents of its bladder. There was nothing to be done, and I could not help roaring with laughter.

Nevertheless, a strong northerly wind rendered our situation an extremely unpleasant one. At the slightest noise I cried, "Who goes there?" threatening to fire on anyone who dared approach. I spent two hours in this tragi-comic position, until at last Le Due rode up and told me that a band of peasants, all armed and provided with lanterns, were approaching to our assistance.

In less than an hour, the carriage, the horses, and Alfani were seen to. I kept two of the country-folk to serve as postillions, and I sent the others away well paid for the interruption of their sleep. I reached St. Agatha at day-break, and I made the devil's own noise at the door of the postmaster, calling for an attorney to take down my statement, and threatening to have the postillions who had overturned and deserted me, hanged.

A wheelwright inspected my coach and pronounced the axle-tree broken, and told me I should have to remain for a day at least.

Don Ciccio, who stood in need of a surgeon's aid, called on the Marquis Galliani without telling me anything about it. However, the marquis hastened to beg me to stay at his house till I could continue my journey. I accepted the invitation with great pleasure, and with this my ill humour, which

was really only the result of my desire to make a great fuss like a great man, evaporated.

The marquis ordered my carriage to be taken to his coach-house, took me by the arm, and led me to his house. He was as learned as he was polite, and a perfect Neapolitan—*i.e.*, devoid of all ceremony. He had not the brilliant wit of his brother, whom I had known at Paris as secretary of embassy under the Count Cantillana Montdragon, but he possessed a well-ordered judgment, founded on study and the perusal of ancient and modern classics. Above all, he was a great mathematician, and was then preparing an annotated edition of Vitruvius, which was afterwards published.

The marquis introduced me to his wife, whom I knew as the intimate friend of my dear Lucrezia. There was something saint-like in her expression, and to see her surrounded by her little children was like looking at a picture of the Holy Family.

Don Ciccio was put to bed directly, and a surgeon sent for, who consoled him by saying that it was only a simple luxation, and that he would be well again in a few days.

At noon a carriage stopped at the door, and Lucrezia got down. She embraced the marchioness, and said to me in the most natural manner, as we shook hands,—

“What happy chance brings you here, dear Don Giacomo?”

She told her friend that I was a friend of her late husband's, and that she had recently seen me again with great pleasure at the Duke de Matalone's.

After dinner, on finding myself alone with this charming woman, I asked her if it were not possible for us to pass a happy night together, but she shewed me that it was out of the question, and I had to yield. I renewed my offer to marry her.

"Buy a property," said she, "in the kingdom of Naples, and I will spend the remainder of my days with you, without asking a priest to give us his blessing, unless we happen to have children."

I could not deny that Lucrezia spoke very sensibly, and I could easily have bought land in Naples, and lived comfortably on it, but the idea of binding myself down to one place was so contrary to my feelings that I had the good sense to prefer my vagabond life to all the advantages which our union would have given me, and I do not think that Lucrezia altogether disapproved of my resolution.

After supper I took leave of everybody, and I set out at day-break in order to get to Rome by the next day. I had only fifteen stages to do, and the road was excellent.

As we were getting into Carillano, I saw one of the two-wheeled carriages, locally called *mantice*, two horses were being put into it, while my carriage required four. I got out, and on hearing myself

called I turned round. I was not a little surprised to find that the occupants of the *mantice* were a young and pretty girl and Signora Diana, the Prince de Cassaro's mistress, who owed me three hundred ounces. She told me that she was going to Rome, and that she would be glad if we could make the journey together.

"I suppose you don't mind stopping for the night at Piperno?"

"No," said I, "I am afraid that can't be managed; I don't intend to break my journey."

"But you would get to Rome by to-morrow."

"I know that, but I sleep better in my carriage than in the bad beds they give you in the inns."

"I dare not travel by night."

"Well, well, madam, I have no doubt we shall see each other at Rome."

"You are a cruel man. You see I have only a stupid servant, and a maid who is as timid as I am, besides it is cold and my carriage is open. I will keep you company in yours."

"I really can't take you in, as all the available space is taken up by my old secretary, who broke his arm yesterday."

"Shall we dine together at Terracino? We could have a little talk."

"Certainly."

We made good cheer at this small town, which is the frontier of the States of the Church. We

should not reach Piperno till far on in the night, and the lady renewed and redoubled her efforts to keep me till day-break; but though young and pretty she did not take my fancy; she was too fair and too fat. But her maid, who was a pretty brunette, with a delicious rounded form and a sparkling eye, excited all my feelings of desire. A vague hope of possessing the maid won me over, and I ended by promising the signora to sup with her, and not to continue my journey without giving notice to the landlord.

When we got to Piperno, I succeeded in telling the pretty maid that if she would let me have her quietly I would not go any further. She promised to wait for me, and allowed me to take such liberties as are usually the signs of perfect complaisance.

We had our supper, and I wished the ladies good night and escorted them to their room, where I took note of the relative positions of their beds so that there should be no mistake. I left them and came back in a quarter of an hour. Finding the door open I felt sure of success, and I got into bed; but as I found out, it was the signora and not the maid who received me. Evidently the little hussy had told her mistress the story, and the mistress had thought fit to take the maid's place. There was no possibility of my being mistaken, for though I could not see I could feel.

For a moment I was undecided, should I re-

main in bed and make the best of what I had got, or go on my way to Rome immediately? The latter counsel prevailed. I called Le Duc, gave my orders, and started, enjoying the thought of the confusion of the two women, who must have been in a great rage at the failure of their plans. I saw Signora Diana three or four times at Rome, and we bowed without speaking; if I had thought it likely that she would pay me the four hundred louis she owed me I might have taken the trouble to call on her, but I know that your stage queens are the worst debtors in the world.

My brother, the Chevalier Mengs, and the Abbé Winckelmann were all in good health and spirits. Costa was delighted to see me again. I sent him off directly to His Holiness's *scopatore maggiore* to warn him that I was coming to take polenta with him, and all he need do was to get a good supper for twelve. I was sure of finding Mariuccia there, for I knew that Momolo had noticed her presence pleased me.

The carnival began the day after my arrival, and I hired a superb landau for the whole week. The Roman landaus seat four people and have a hood which may be lowered at pleasure. In these landaus one drives along the Corso with or without masks from nine to twelve o'clock during the carnival time.

From time immemorial the Corso at Rome has presented a strange and diverting spectacle during

the carnival. The horses start from the Piazza del Popolo, and gallop along to the Column of Trajan, between two lines of carriages drawn up beside two narrow pavements which are crowded with maskers and people of all classes. All the windows are decorated. As soon as the horses have passed the carriages begin to move, and the maskers on foot and horseback occupy the middle of the street. The air is full of real and false sweetmeats, pamphlets, pasquinades, and puns. Throughout the mob, composed of the best and worst classes of Rome, liberty reigns supreme, and when twelve o'clock is announced by the third report of the cannon of St. Angelo the Corso begins to clear, and in five minutes you would look in vain for a carriage or a masker. The crowd disperses amongst the neighbouring streets, and fills the opera houses, the theatres, the rope-dancers' exhibitions, and even the puppet-shows. The restaurants and taverns are not left desolate; everywhere you will find crowds of people, for during the carnival the Romans only think of eating, drinking, and enjoying themselves.

I banked my money with M. Belloni and got a letter of credit on Turin, where I expected to find the Abbé Gama and to receive a commission to represent the Portuguese Court at the Congress of Augsburg, to which all Europe was looking forward, and then I went to inspect my little room,

where I hoped to meet Mariuccia the next day. I found everything in good order.

In the evening Momolo and his family received me with joyful exclamations. The eldest daughter said with a smile that she was sure she would please me by sending for Mariuccia.

"You are right," said I, "I shall be delighted to see the fair Mariuccia."

A few minutes after she entered with her puritanical mother, who told me I must not be surprised to see her daughter better dressed, as she was going to be married in a few days. I congratulated her, and Momolo's daughters asked who was the happy man. Mariuccia blushed and said modestly, to one of them,—

"It is somebody whom you know, So and so, he saw me here, and we are going to open a hair-dresser's shop."

"The marriage was arranged by good Father St. Barnabé," added the mother. "He has in his keeping my daughter's dower of four hundred Roman crowns."

"He's a good lad," said Momolo. "I have a high opinion of him; he would have married one of my daughters if I could have given him such a dowry."

At these words the girl in question blushed and lowered her eyes.

"Never mind, my dear," said I, "your turn will come in time."

She took my words as seriously meant, and her face lit up with joy. She thought I had guessed her love for Costa, and her idea was confirmed when I told him to get my landau the next day and take out all Momolo's daughters, well masked, as it would not do for them to be recognized in a carriage I meant to make use of myself. I also bade him hire some handsome costumes from a Jew, and paid the hire-money myself. This put them all in a good humour.

"How about Signora Maria?" said the jealous sister.

"As Signora Maria is going to be married," I replied, "she must not be present at any festivity without her future husband."

The mother applauded this decision of mine, and sly Mariuccia pretended to feel mortified. I turned to Momolo and begged him to ask Mariuccia's future husband to meet me at supper, by which I pleased her mother greatly.

I felt very tired, and having nothing to keep me after seeing Mariuccia, I begged the company to excuse me, and after wishing them a good appetite I left them.

I walked out next morning at an early hour. I had no need of going into the church, which I reached at seven o'clock, for Mariuccia saw me at some distance off and followed me, and we were

soon alone together in the little room, which love and voluptuous pleasure had transmuted into a sumptuous place. We would gladly have talked to each other, but as we had only an hour before us, we set to without even taking off our clothes. After the last kiss which ended the third assault, she told me that she was to be married on the eve of Shrove Tuesday, and that all had been arranged by her confessor. She also thanked me for having asked Momolo to invite her intended.

"When shall we see each other again, my angel?"

"On Sunday, the eve of my wedding, we shall be able to spend four hours together."

"Delightful! I promise you that when you leave me you will be in such a state that the caresses of your husband won't hurt you."

She smiled and departed, and I threw myself on the bed where I rested for a good hour.

As I was going home I met a carriage and four going at a great speed. A footman rode in front of the carriage, and within it I saw a young nobleman. My attention was arrested by the blue ribbon on his breast. I gazed at him, and he called out my name and had the carriage stopped. I was extremely surprised when I found it was Lord O'Callaghan, whom I had known at Paris at his mother's, the Countess of Lismore. who was separated from her husband, and was the kept mistress of M. de St. Aubin, the unworthy successor of the good and virtu-

ous Fénélon in the archbishopric of Cambrai. However, the archbishop owed his promotion to the fact that he was a bastard of the Duc d'Orleans, the French Regent.

Lord O'Callaghan was a fine-looking young man, with wit and talent, but the slave of his unbridled passions and of every species of vice. I knew that if he were lord in name he was not so in fortune, and I was astonished to see him driving such a handsome carriage, and still more so at his blue ribbon. In a few words he told me that he was going to dine with the Pretender, but that he would sup at home. He invited me to come to supper, and I accepted.

After dinner I took a short walk, and then went to enliven myself at the theatre, where I saw Momolo's girls strutting about with Costa; afterwards I went to Lord O'Callaghan, and was pleasantly surprised to meet the poet Poinset. He was young, short, ugly, full of poetic fire, a wit, and dramatist. Five or six years later the poor fellow fell into the Guadalquivir and was drowned. He had gone to Madrid in the hope of making his fortune. As I had known him at Paris I addressed him as an old acquaintance.

"What are you doing at Rome? Where's my Lord O'Callaghan?"

"He's in the next room, but as his father is dead his title is now Earl of Lismore. You know

he was an adherent of the Pretender's. I left Paris with him, well enough pleased at being able to come to Rome without its costing me anything."

"Then the earl is a rich man now?"

"Not exactly; but he will be, as he is his father's heir, and the old earl left an immense fortune. It is true that it is all confiscated, but that is nothing, as his claims are irresistible."

"In short, he is rich in claims and rich in the future; but how did he get himself made a knight of one of the French king's orders?"

"You're joking. That is the blue ribbon of the Order of St. Michael, of which the late Elector of Cologne was grand master. As you know, my lord plays exquisitely on the violin, and when he was at Bonn he played the Elector a concerto by Tartini. The prince could not find words in which to express the pleasure of my lord's performance, and gave him the ribbon you have seen."

"A fine present, doubtless."

"You don't know what pleasure it gave my lord, for when we go back to Paris everybody will take it for the Order of the Holy Ghost."

We passed into a large room, where we found the earl with the party he had asked to supper. As soon as he saw me he embraced me, called me his dear friend, and named his guests. There were seven or eight girls, all of them pretty, three or four *castrati* who played women's parts in the Roman

theatre, and five or six abbés, the husband of every wife and the wives of every husband, who boasted of their wickedness, and challenged the girls to be more shameless than they. The girls were not common courtezans, but past mistresses of music, painting, and vice considered as a fine art. The kind of society may be imagined when I say that I found myself a perfect novice amongst them.

"Where are you going, prince?" said the earl to a respectable-looking man who was making for the door.

"I don't feel well, my lord. I think I must go out."

"What prince is that?" said I.

"The Prince de Chimai. He is a sub-deacon, and is endeavouring to gain permission to marry, lest his family should become extinct."

"I admire his prudence or his delicacy, but I am afraid I should not imitate him."

There were twenty-four of us at table, and it is no exaggeration to say that we emptied a hundred bottles of the choicest wines. Everybody was drunk, with the exception of myself and the poet Poincinct, who had taken nothing but water. The company rose from table, and then began a foul orgy which I should never have conceived possible, and which no pen could describe, though possibly a seasoned profligate might get some idea of it.

A *castrato* and a girl of almost equal height

proposed to strip in an adjoining room, and to lie on their backs, in the same bed with their faces covered. They challenged us all to guess which was which.

We all went in and nobody could pronounce from sight which was male and which was female, so I bet the earl fifty crowns that I would point out the woman. He accepted the wager, and I guessed correctly, but payment was out of the question.

This first act of the orgy ended with the prostitution of the two individuals, who defied everybody to accomplish the great act. All, with the exception of Poinciset and myself, made the attempt, but their efforts were in vain.

The second act displayed four or five couples reversed, and here the abbés shone, both in the active and passive parts of this lascivious spectacle. I was the only person respected.

All at once, the earl, who had hitherto remained perfectly motionless, attacked the wretched Poinciset, who in vain attempted to defend himself. He had to strip like my lord, who was as naked as the others. We stood round in a circle. Suddenly the earl, taking his watch, promised it to the first who succeeded in giving them a sure mark of sensibility. The desire of gaining the prize excited the impure crowd immensely, and the *castrati*, the girls, and the abbés all did their utmost, each one striving to be the first. They had to draw lots. This part inter-

ested me most, for throughout this almost incredible scene of debauchery I did not experience the slightest sensation, although under other circumstances any of the girls would have claimed my homage, but all I did was to laugh, especially to see the poor poet in terror of experiencing the lust of the flesh, for the profligate nobleman swore that if he made him lose he would deliver him up to the brutal lust of all the abbés. He escaped, probably through fear of the consequences.

The orgy came to an end when nobody had any further hopes of getting the watch. The secret of the Lesbians was only employed, however, by the abbés and the *castrati*. The girls, wishing to be able to despise those who made use of it, refrained from doing so. I suspect they were actuated by pride rather than shame, as they might possibly have employed it without success.

This vile debauch disgusted me, and yet gave me a better knowledge of myself. I could not help confessing that my life had been endangered, for the only arm I had was my sword, but I should certainly have used it if the earl had tried to treat me like the others, and as he had treated poor Poinset. I never understood how it was that he respected me, for he was quite drunk, and in a kind of Bacchic fury.

As I left, I promised to come and see him as
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often as he pleased, but I promised myself never to set foot in his house again.

Next day, he came to see me in the afternoon, and asked me to walk with him to the Villa Medici.

I complimented him on the immense wealth he had inherited to enable him to live so splendidly, but he laughed and told me that he did not possess fifty piastres, that his father had left nothing but debts, and that he himself already owed three or four thousand crowns.

"I wonder people give you credit, then."

"They give me credit because everybody knows that I have drawn a bill of exchange on Paris to the tune of two hundred thousand francs. But in four or five days the bill will be returned protested, and I am only waiting for that to happen to make my escape."

"If you are certain of its being protested, I advise you to make your escape to-day; for as it is so large a sum it may be taken up before it is due."

"No, I won't do that; I have one hope left. I have written to tell my mother that I shall be undone if she does not furnish the banker, on whom I have drawn the bill, with sufficient funds and if she does that, the bill will be accepted. You know my mother is very fond of me."

"Yes, but I also know that she is far from rich."

"True, but M. de St. Aubin is rich enough, and

between you and me I think he is my father. Meanwhile, my creditors are almost as quiet as I am. All those girls you saw yesterday would give me all they have if I asked them, as they are all expecting me to make them a handsome present in the course of the week, but I won't abuse their trust in me. But I am afraid I shall be obliged to cheat the Jew, who wants me to give him three thousand sequins for this ring, as I know it is only worth one thousand."

"He will send the police after you."

"I defy him to do whatever he likes."

The ring was set with a straw-coloured diamond of nine or ten carats. He begged me to keep his secret as we parted. I did not feel any sentiments of pity for this extravagant madman, as I only saw in him a man unfortunate by his own fault, whose fate would probably make him end his days in a prison unless he had the courage to blow his brains out.

I went to Momolo's in the evening, and found the intended husband of my fair Mariuccia there, but not the lady herself. I heard she had sent word to the *scopatore santissimo* that, as her father had come from Palestrina to be present at her wedding, she could not come to supper. I admired her subtlety. A young girl has no need of being instructed in diplomacy, nature and her own heart are her teachers, and she never blunders. At supper I studied the young man, and found him eminently suitable

for Mariuccia; he was handsome, modest, and intelligent, and whatever he said was spoken frankly and to the point.

He told me before Momolo's daughter, Tecla, that he would have married her if she had possessed means to enable him to open his shop, and that he had reason to thank God for having met Maria, whose confessor had been such a true spiritual father to her. I asked him where the wedding festivities were to take place, and he told me they were to be at his father's house, on the other side of the Tiber. As his father, who kept a garden, was poor, he had furnished him with ten crowns to defray the expenses.

I wanted to give him the ten crowns, but how was I to do it? It would have betrayed me.

"Is your father's garden a pretty one?" I asked.

"Not exactly pretty, but very well kept. As he owns the land, he has separated a plot which he wants to sell; it would bring in twenty crowns a year, and I should be as happy as a cardinal if I could buy it."

"How much will it cost?"

"It's a heavy price; two hundred crowns."

"Why, that's cheap! Listen to me. I have met your future bride at this house, and I have found her all worthy of happiness. She deserves an honest young fellow like you for a husband. Now what would you do supposing I were to make you a present of two hundred crowns to buy the garden?"

"I should put it to my wife's dowry."

"Then here are the two hundred crowns. I shall give them to Momolo, as I don't know you well enough, though I think you are perfectly to be trusted. The garden is yours, as part of your wife's dowry."

Momolo took the money, and promised to buy the garden the following day, and the young man shedding tears of joy and gratitude fell on his knees and kissed my hand. All the girls wept, as I myself did, for there's a contagion in such happy tears. Nevertheless, they did not all proceed from the same source; some were virtuous and some vicious, and the young man's were the only ones whose source was pure and unalloyed. I lifted him from the ground, kissed him, and wished him a happy marriage. He made bold to ask me to his wedding, but I refused, thanking him kindly. I told him that if he wanted to please me, he must come and sup at Momolo's on the eve of his wedding, and I begged the good *scopatore* to ask Mariuccia, her father and mother as well. I was sure of seeing her for the last time on the Sunday morning.

At seven o'clock on the Sunday morning we were in each other's arms, with four hours before us. After the first burst of mutual ardour she told me that all arrangements had been made in her house the evening before, in the presence of her confessor and of Momolo; and that on the receipt for the two

hundred crowns being handed in the notary had put the garden into the settlement, and that the good father had made her a present of twenty piastres towards defraying the notary's fees and the wedding expenses.

"Everything is for the best, and I am sure I shall be happy. My intended adores you, but you did wisely not to accept his invitation, for you would have found everything so poor, and besides tongues might have been set wagging to my disadvantage."

"You are quite right, dearest, but what do you intend to do if your husband finds that the door has been opened by someone else, for possibly he expects you to be a maid."

"I expect he will know no more about it than I did the first time you knew me; besides, I do not feel that you have defiled me, and my clean conscience will not allow me to think of the matter; and I am sure that he will not think of it any more than I."

"Yes, but if he does?"

"It would not be delicate on his part, but what should prevent me from replying that I don't know what he means?"

"You are right; that's the best way. But have you told your confessor of our mutual enjoyment?"

"No, for as I did not give myself up to you with any criminal intention, I do not think I have offended God."

"You are an angel, and I admire the clearness

of your reasoning. But listen to me; it's possible that you are already with child, or that you may become so this morning; promise to name the child after me."

"I will do so."

The four hours sped rapidly away. After the sixth assault we were wearied though not satiated. We parted with tears, and swore to love each other as brother and sister ever after.

I went home, bathed, slept an hour, rose, dressed, and dined pleasantly with the family. In the evening I took the Mengs family for a drive in my landau, and we then went to the theatre, where the *castrato* who played the prima donna was a great attraction. He was the favourite pathic of Cardinal Borghese, and supped every evening with his eminence.

This *castrato* had a fine voice, but his chief attraction was his beauty. I had seen him in man's clothes in the street, but though a fine-looking fellow, he had not made any impression on me, for one could see at once that he was only half a man, but on the stage in woman's dress the illusion was complete; he was ravishing.

He was enclosed in a carefully-made corset and looked like a nymph; and incredible though it may seem, his breast was as beautiful as any woman's; it was the monster's chiefest charm. However well one knew the fellow's neutral sex, as soon as one

looked at his breast one felt all aglow and quite madly amorous of him. To feel nothing one would have to be as cold and impassive as a German. As he walked the boards, waiting for the refrain of the air he was singing, there was something grandly voluptuous about him; and as he glanced towards the boxes, his black eyes, at once tender and modest, ravished the heart. He evidently wished to fan the flame of those who loved him as a man, and probably would not have cared for him if he had been a woman.

Rome the holy, which thus strives to make all men pederasts, denies the fact, and will not believe in the effects of the glamour of her own devising.

I made these reflections aloud, and an ecclesiastic, wishing to blind me to the truth, spoke as follows:

"You are quite right. Why should this *castrato* be allowed to shew his breast, of which the fairest Roman lady might be proud, and yet wish everyone to consider him as a man and not a woman? If the stage is forbidden to the fair sex lest they excite desires, why do they seek out men-monsters made in the form of women, who excite much more criminal desires? They keep on preaching that pederasty is comparatively unknown and entraps only a few, but many clever men endeavour to be entrapped, and end by thinking it so pleasant that they prefer these monsters to the most beautiful women."

"The Pope would be sure of heaven if he put a stop to this scandalous practice.

"I don't agree with you. One could not have a pretty actress to supper without causing a scandal, but such an invitation to a *castrato* makes nobody talk. It is of course known perfectly well that after supper both heads rest on one pillow, but what everybody knows is ignored by all. One may sleep with a man out of mere friendship, it is not so with a woman."

"True, monsignor, appearances are saved, and a sin concealed is half pardoned, as they say in Paris."

"At Rome we say it is pardoned altogether. *Peccato nascosto non offende.*"

His Jesuitical arguments interested me, for I knew that he was an avowed partisan of the forbidden fruit.

In one of the boxes I saw the Marchioness Passarini (whom I had known at Dresden) with Don Antonio Borghese, and I went to pay my addresses to them. The prince, whom I had known at Paris ten years before, recognized me, and asked me to dine with him on the following day. I went, but my lord was not at home. A page told me that my place was laid at table, and that I could dine just as if the prince was there, on which I turned my back on him and went away. On Ash Wednesday he sent his man to ask me to sup with him and the marchioness, who was his mistress, and I sent word

that I would not fail to come; but he waited for me in vain. Pride is the daughter of folly, and always keeps its mother's nature.

After the opera I went to Momolo's, where I found Mariuccia, her father, her mother, and her future husband. They were anxiously expecting me. It is not difficult to make people happy when one selects for one's bounty persons who really deserve happiness. I was amidst poor but honest people, and I can truly say that I had a delightful supper. It may be that some of my enjoyment proceeded from a feeling of vanity, for I knew that I was the author of the happiness depicted on the faces of the bride and bridegroom and of the father and mother of Mariuccia; but when vanity causes good deeds it is a virtue. Nevertheless, I owe it to myself to tell my readers that my pleasure was too pure to have in it any admixture of vice.

After supper I made a small bank at faro, making everybody play with counters, as nobody had a penny, and I was so fortunate as to make everyone win a few ducats.

After the game we danced in spite of the prohibition of the Pope, whom no Roman can believe to be infallible, for he forbids dancing and permits games of chance. His successor Ganganelli followed the opposite course, and was no better obeyed. To avoid suspicion I did not give the pair any present, but I gave up my landan to them that they might

enjoy the carnival on the Corso, and I told Costa to get them a box at the Capranica Theatre. Momolo asked me to supper on Shrove Tuesday.

I wished to leave Rome on the second day of Lent, and I called on the Holy Father at a time when all Rome was on the Corso. His Holiness welcomed me most graciously, and said he was surprised that I had not gone to see the sights on the Corso like everybody else. I replied that as a lover of pleasure I had chosen the greatest pleasure of all for a Christian—namely, to kneel at the feet of the vicar of Christ on earth. He bowed with a kind of majestic humility, which shewed me how the compliment had pleased him. He kept me for more than an hour, talking about Venice, Padua, and Paris, which latter city the worthy man would not have been sorry to have visited. I again commended myself to his apostolic intercession to enable me to return to my native country, and he replied,—

“Have recourse to God, dear son; His grace will be more efficacious than my prayers;” and then he blessed me and wished me a prosperous journey.

I saw that the Head of the Church had no great opinion of his own power.

On Shrove Tuesday I dressed myself richly in the costume of Polichinello, and rode along the Corso showering sweetmeats on all the pretty women I saw. Finally I emptied the basket on the daughters of the worthy *scopatore*, whom Costa was tak-

ing about in my landau with all the dignity of a pasha.

At night-time I took off my costume and went to Momolo's, where I expected to see dear Mariuccia for the last time. Supper passed off in almost a similar manner to the supper of last Sunday; but there was an interesting novelty for me—namely, the sight of my beloved mistress in her character of bride. Her husband seemed to be much more reserved with respect to me than at our first meeting. I was puzzled by his behaviour, and sat down by Mariuccia and proceeded to question her. She told me all the circumstances which had passed on the first night, and she spoke highly of her husband's good qualities. He was kind, amorous, good-tempered, and delicate. No doubt he must have noticed that the casket had been opened, but he had said nothing about it. As he had spoken about me, she had not been able to resist the pleasure of telling him that I was her sole benefactor, at which, so far from being offended, he seemed to trust in her more than ever.

“But has he not questioned you indirectly as to the connection between us?”

“Not at all. I told him that you went to my confessor after having spoken to me once only in the church, where I told you what a good chance I had of being married to him.”

“Do you think he believed you?”

"I am not sure; however, even if it were otherwise, it is enough that he pretends to, for I am determined to win his esteem."

"You are right, and I think all the better of him for his suspicions, for it is better to marry a man with some sense in his head than to marry a fool."

I was so pleased with what she told me that when I took leave of the company I embraced the hairdresser, and drawing a handsome gold watch from my fob I begged him to accept it as a souvenir of me. He received it with the utmost gratitude. From my pocket I took a ring, worth at least six hundred francs, and put it on his wife's finger, wishing them a fair posterity and all manner of happiness, and I then went home to bed, telling Le Duc and Costa that we must begin to pack up next day.

I was just getting up when they brought me a note from Lord Lismore, begging me to come and speak to him at noon at the Villa Borghese.

I had some suspicion of what he might want, and kept the appointment. I felt in a mood to give him some good advice. Indeed, considering the friendship between his mother and myself, it was my duty to do so.

He came up to me and gave me a letter he had received the evening before from his mother. She told him that Paris de Monmartel had just informed her that he was in possession of a bill for two hun-

dred thousand francs drawn by her son, and that he would honour it if she would furnish him with the funds. She had replied that she would let him know in two or three days if she could do so; but she warned her son that she had only asked for this delay to give him time to escape, as the bill would certainly be protested and returned, it being absolutely out of the question for her to get the money.

"You had better make yourself scarce as soon as you can," said I, returning him the letter.

"Buy this ring, and so furnish me with the means for my escape. You would not know that it was not my property if I had not told you so in confidence."

I made an appointment with him, and had the stone taken out and valued by one of the best jewelers in Rome.

"I know this stone," said he, "it is worth two thousand Roman crowns."

At four o'clock I took the earl five hundred crowns in gold and fifteen hundred crowns in paper, which he would have to take to a banker, who would give him a bill of exchange in Amsterdam.

"I will be off at nightfall," said he, "and travel by myself to Amsterdam, only taking such effects as are absolutely necessary, and my beloved blue ribbon."

"A pleasant journey to you," said I, and left him. In ten days I had the stone mounted at Bologna.

I got a letter of introduction from Cardinal Albani for Onorati, the nuncio at Florence, and another letter from M. Mengs to Sir —— Mann, whom he begged to receive me in his house. I was going to Florence for the sake of the Corticelli and my dear Thérèse, and I reckoned on the auditor's feigning to ignore my return, in spite of his unjust order, especially if I were residing at the English minister's.

On the second day of Lent the disappearance of Lord Lismore was the talk of the town. The English tailor was ruined, the Jew who owned the ring was in despair, and all the silly fellow's servants were turned out of the house in almost a state of nakedness, as the tailor had unceremoniously taken possession of everything in the way of clothes that he could lay his hands on.

Poor Poinsinet came to see me in a pitiable condition; he had only his shirt and overcoat. He had been despoiled of everything, and threatened with imprisonment. "I haven't a farthing," said the poor child of the muses, "I have only the shirt on my back. I know nobody here, and I think I shall go and throw myself into the Tiber."

He was destined, not to be drowned in the Tiber but in the Guadalquivir. I calmed him by offering to take him to Florence with me, but I warned him that I must leave him there, as someone was expecting me at Florence. He immediately took up his

abode with me, and wrote verses incessantly till it was time to go.

My brother Jean made me a present of an onyx of great beauty. It was a cameo, representing Venus bathing, and a genuine antique, as the name of the artist, Sostrates, was cut on the stone. Two years later I sold it to Dr. Masti, at London, for three hundred pounds, and it is possibly still in the British Museum.

I went my way with Poinsinet who amused me, in spite of his sadness, with his droll fancies. In two days I got down at Dr. Vannini's, who tried to conceal his surprise at seeing me. I lost no time, but waited on Sir — Mann immediately, and found him sitting at table. He gave me a very friendly reception, but he seemed alarmed when, in reply to his question, I told him that my dispute with the auditor had not been arranged. He told me plainly that he thought I had made a mistake in returning to Florence, and that he would be compromised by my staying with him. I pointed out that I was only passing through Florence.

"That's all very well," said he, "but you know you ought to call on the auditor."

I promised to do so, and returned to my lodging. I had scarcely shut the door, when an agent of police came and told me that the auditor had something to say to me, and would be glad to see me at an early hour next morning.

I was enraged at this order, and determined to start forthwith rather than obey. Full of this idea I called on Thérèse and found she was at Pisa. I then went to see the Corticelli, who threw her arms round my neck, and made use of the Bolognese grimaces appropriate to the occasion. To speak the truth, although the girl was pretty, her chief merit in my eyes was that she made me laugh.

I gave some money to her mother to get us a good supper, and I took the girl out on pretence of going for a walk. I went with her to my lodging, and left her with Poinsinet, and going to another room I summed Costa and Vannini. I told Costa in Vannini's presence to go on with Le Duc and my luggage the following day, and to call for me at the "Pilgrim" at Bologna. I gave Vannini my instructions, and he left the room; and then I ordered Costa to leave Florence with Signora Laura and her son, and to tell them that I and the daughter were on in front. Le Duc received similar orders, and calling Poinsinet I gave him ten louis, and begged him to look out for some other lodging that very evening. The worthy but unfortunate young man wept grateful tears, and told me that he would set out for Parma on foot next day, and that there M. Tillot would do something for him.

I went back to the next room, and told the Corticelli to come with me. She did so under the impression that we were going back to her mother's,

but without taking the trouble to undeceive her I had a carriage and pair got ready, and told the postillion to drive to Uccellatoio, the first post on the Bologna road.

"Where in the world are we going?" said she.

"Bologna."

"How about mamma?"

"She will come on to-morrow."

"Does she know about it?"

"No, but she will to-morrow when Costa comes to tell her, and to fetch her and your brother."

She liked the joke, and got into the carriage laughing, and we drove away.

CHAPTER XI

MY ARRIVAL AT BOLOGNA—I AM EXPELLED FROM
MODENA—I VISIT PARMA AND TURIN—THE PRETTY
JEWESS—THE DRESSMAKER

THE Corticelli had a good warm mantle, but the fool who carried her off had no cloak, even of the most meagre kind, to keep off the piercing cold, which was increased by a keen wind blowing right in our faces.

In spite of all I would not halt, for I was afraid I might be pursued and obliged to return, which would have greatly vexed me.

When I saw that the postillion was slackening his speed, I increased the amount of the present I was going to make him, and once more we rushed along at a headlong pace. I felt perishing with the cold; while the postillions seeing me so lightly clad, and so prodigal of my money to speed them on their way, imagined that I was a prince carrying off the heiress of some noble family. We heard them talking to this effect while they changed horses, and the Corticelli was so much amused that she did nothing but laugh for the rest of the way. In five hours we

covered forty miles; we started from Florence at eight o'clock, and at one in the morning we stopped at a post in the Pope's territory, where I had nothing to fear. The stage goes under the name of "The Ass Unburdened."

The odd name of the inn made my mistress laugh afresh. Everybody was asleep, but the noise I made and the distribution of a few pauls procured me the privilege of a fire. I was dying of hunger, and they coolly told me there was nothing to eat. I laughed in the landlord's face, and told him to bring me his butter, his eggs, his macaroni, a ham, and some Parmesan cheese, for I knew that so much will be found in the inns all over Italy. The repast was soon ready, and I shewed the idiot host that he had materials for an excellent meal. We ate like four, and afterwards they made up an impromptu bed and we went to sleep, telling them to call me as soon as a carriage and four drew up.

Full of ham and macaroni, slightly warmed with the Chianti and Montepulciano, and tired with our journey, we stood more in need of slumber than of love, and so we gave ourselves up to sleep till morning. Then we gave a few moments to pleasure, but it was so slight an affair as not to be worth talking about.

At one o'clock we began to feel hungry again and got up, and the host provided us with an excellent dinner, after receiving instructions from me.

I was astonished not to see the carriage draw up, but I waited patiently all day. Night came on and still no coach, and I began to feel anxious; but the Corticelli persisted in laughing at everything. Next morning I sent off an express messenger with instructions for Costa. In the event of any violence having taken place, I was resolved to return to Florence, of which city I could at any time make myself free by the expenditure of two hundred crowns.

The messenger started at noon, and returned at two o'clock with the news that my servants would shortly be with me. My coach was on its way, and behind it a smaller carriage with two horses, in which sat an old woman and a young man.

"That's the mother," said Corticelli; "now we shall have some fun. Let's get something for them to eat, and be ready to hear the history of this marvellous adventure which she will remember to her dying day."

Costa told me that the auditor had revenged my contempt of his orders by forbidding the post authorities to furnish any horses for my carriage. Hence the delay. But here we heard the allocution of the Signora Laura.

"I got an excellent supper ready," she began, "according to your orders; it cost me more than ten pauls, as I shall shew you, and I hope you will make it up to me as I'm but a poor woman. All

was ready and I joyfully expected you, but in vain; I was in despair. At last when midnight came I sent my son to your lodging to enquire after you, but you may imagine my grief when I heard that nobody knew what had become of you. I passed a sleepless night, weeping all the time, and in the morning I went and complained to the police that you had taken off my daughter, and asked them to send after you and make you give her back to me. But only think, they laughed at me! 'Why did you let her go out without you?' says one, laughing in my face. 'Your daughter's in good hands,' says another, 'you know perfectly well where she is.' In fact I was grossly slandered."

"Slandered?" said the Corticelli.

"Yes, slandered, for it was as much as to say that I had consented to your being carried off, and if I had done that the fools might have known I would not have come to them about it. I went away in a rage to Dr. Vannini's, where I found your man, who told me that you had gone to Bologna, and that I could follow you if I liked. I consented to this plan, and I hope you will pay my travelling expenses. But I can't help telling you that this is rather beyond a joke."

I consoled her by telling her I would pay all she had spent, and we set off for Bologna the next day, and reached that town at an early hour. I sent

my servants to the inn with my carriage, and I went to lodge with the Corticelli.

I spent a week with the girl, getting my meals from the inn, and enjoying a diversity of pleasures which I shall remember all my days; my young wanton had a large circle of female friends, all pretty and all kind. I lived with them like a sultan, and still I delight to recall this happy time, and I say with a sigh, *Tempi passati!*

There are many towns in Italy where one can enjoy all the pleasures obtainable at Bologna; but nowhere so cheaply, so easily, or with so much freedom. The living is excellent, and there are arcades where one can walk in the shade in learned and witty company. It is a great pity that either from the air, the water, or the wine—for men of science have not made up their minds on the subject—persons who live at Bologna are subject to a slight itch. The Bolognese, however, far from finding this unpleasant, seem to think it an advantage; it gives them the pleasure of scratching themselves. In spring-time the ladies distinguish themselves by the grace with which they use their fingers.

Towards mid-Lent I left the Corticelli, wishing her a pleasant journey, for she was going to fulfil a year's engagement at Prague as second dancer. I promised to fetch her and her mother to Paris, and my readers will see how I kept my word.

I got to Modena the evening after I left Bologna,

and I stopped there, with one of those sudden whims to which I have always been subject. Next morning I went out to see the pictures, and as I was returning to my lodging for dinner a blackguardly-looking fellow came up and ordered me, on the part of the Government, to continue my journey on the day following at latest.

"Very good," said I, and the fellow went away.

"Who is that man?" I said to the landlord.

"A spy."

"A spy; and the Government dares to send such a fellow to me?"

"The *borgello* must have sent him."

"Then the *borgello* is the Governor of Modena—the infamous wretch!"

"Hush! hush! all the best families speak to him in the street."

"Then the best people are very low here, I suppose?"

"Not more than anywhere else. He is the manager of the opera house, and the greatest noblemen dine with him and thus secure his favour."

"It's incredible! But why should the high and mighty *borgello* send me away from Modena?"

"I don't know, but do you take my advice and go and speak to him; you will find him a fine fellow."

Instead of going to see this b . . . I called on the Abbé Testa Grossa, whom I had known at Venice

in 1753. Although he was a man of low extraction he had a keen wit. At this time he was old and resting on his laurels; he had fought his way into favour by the sheer force of merit, and his master, the Duke of Modena, had long chosen him as his representative with other powers.

Abbé Testa Grossa recognized me and gave me the most gracious reception, but when he heard of what had befallen me he seemed much annoyed.

"What can I do?" said I.

"You had better go, as the man may put a much more grievous insult on you."

"I will do so, but could you oblige me by telling me the reason for such a high-handed action?"

"Come again this evening; I shall probably be able to satisfy you."

I called on the abbé again in the evening, for I felt anxious to learn in what way I had offended the lord *borgello*, to whom I thought I was quite unknown. The abbé satisfied me.

"The *borgello*," said he, "saw your name on the bill which he receives daily containing a list of the names of those who enter or leave the city. He remembered that you were daring enough to escape from The Leads, and as he does not at all approve of that sort of thing he resolved not to let the Modenese be contaminated by so egregious an example of the defiance of justice, however unjust it may be; and

in short he has given you the order to leave the town."

"I am much obliged, but I really wonder how it is that while you were telling me this you did not blush to be a subject of the Duke of Modena's. What an unworthy action! How contrary is such a system of government to all the best interests of the state!"

"You are quite right, my dear sir, but I am afraid that as yet men's eyes are not open to what best serves their interests."

"That is doubtless due to the fact that so many men are unworthy."

"I will not contradict you."

"Farewell, abbé."

"Farewell, M. Casanova."

Next morning, just as I was going to get into my carriage, a young man between twenty-five and thirty, tall and strong and broad shouldered, his eyes black and glittering, his eyebrows strongly arched, and his general air being that of a cut-throat, accosted me and begged me to step aside and hear what he had to say.

"If you like to stop at Parma for three days, and if you will promise to give me fifty sequins when I bring you the news that the *borgello* is dead, I promise to shoot him within the next twenty-four hours."

"Thanks. Such an animal as that should be al-

lowed to die a natural death. Here's a crown to drink my health."

At the present time I feel very thankful that I acted as I did, but I confess that if I had felt sure that it was not a trap I should have promised the money. The fear of committing myself spared me this crime.

The next day I got to Parma, and I put up at the posting-house under the name of the Chevalier de Seingalt, which I still bear. When an honest man adopts a name which belongs to no one, no one has a right to contest his use of it; it becomes a man's duty to keep the name. I had now borne it for two years, but I often subjoined to it my family name.

When I got to Parma I dismissed Costa, but in a week after I had the misfortune to take him on again. His father, who was a poor violin player, as I had once been, with a large family to provide for, excited my pity.

I made enquiries about M. Antonio, but he had left the place; and M. Dubois Chalelereux, Director of the Mint, had gone to Venice with the permission of the Duke of Parma, to set up the beam, which was never brought into use. Republics are famous for their superstitious attachment to old customs; they are afraid that changes for the better may destroy the stability of the state, and the government of aristocratic Venice still preserves its original Greek character."

My Spaniard was delighted when I dismissed Costa, and proportionately sorry when I took him back.

"He's no profligate," said Le Duc; "he is sober, and has no liking for bad company. But I think he's a robber, and a dangerous robber, too. I know it, because he seems so scrupulously careful not to cheat you in small things. Remember what I say, sir; he will do you. He is waiting to gain your confidence, and then he will strike home. Now, I am quite a different sort of fellow, a rogue in a small way; but you know me."

His insight was keener than mine, for five or six months later the Italian robbed me of fifty thousand crowns. Twenty-three years afterwards, in 1784, I found him in Venice, valet to Count Hardegg, and I felt inclined to have him hanged. I shewed him by proof positive that I could do so if I liked; but he had resource to tears and supplications, and to the intercession of a worthy man named Bertrand, who lived with the ambassador of the King of Sardinia. I esteemed this individual, and he appealed to me successfully to pardon Costa. I asked the wretch what he had done with the gold and jewels he had stolen from me, and he told me that he had lost the whole of it in furnishing funds for a bank at Biribi, that he had been despoiled by his own associates, and had been poor and miserable ever since.

In the same year in which he robbed me he married Momolo's daughter, and after making her a mother he abandoned her.

To pursue our story.

At Turin I lodged in a private house with the Abbé Gama, who had been expecting me. In spite of the good abbé's sermon on economy, I took the whole of the first floor, and a fine suite it was.

We discussed diplomatic topics, and he assured me that I should be accredited in May, and that he would give me instructions as to the part I was to play. I was pleased with this commission, and I told the abbé that I should be ready to go to Augsburg whenever the ambassadors of the belligerent powers met there.

After making the necessary arrangements with my landlady with regard to my meals I went to a coffee-house to read the papers, and the first person I saw was the Marquis Desarmoises, whom I had known in Savoy. The first thing he said was that all games of chance were forbidden, and that the ladies I had met would no doubt be delighted to see me. As for himself, he said that he lived by playing backgammon, though he was not at all lucky at it, as talent went for more than luck at that game. I can understand how, if fortune is neutral, the best player will win, but I do not see how the contrary can take place.

We went for a walk in the promenade leading

to the citadel, where I saw numerous extremely pretty women. In Turin the fair sex is most delightful, but the police regulations are troublesome to a degree. Owing to the town being a small one and thinly peopled, the police spies find out everything. Thus one cannot enjoy any little freedoms without great precautions and the aid of cunning procuresses, who have to be well paid, as they would be cruelly punished if they were found out. No prostitutes and no kept women are allowed, much to the delight of the married women, and with results which the ignorant police might have anticipated. As well be imagined, pederasty has a fine field in this town, where the passions are kept under lock and key.

Amongst the beauties I looked at, one only attracted me. I asked Desarmoises her name, as he knew all of them.

"That's the famous Leah," said he; "she is a Jewess, and impregnable. She has resisted the attacks of the best strategists in Turin. Her father's a famous horse-dealer; you can go and see her easily enough, but there's nothing to be done there."

The greater the difficulty the more I felt spurred on to attempt it.

"Take me there," said I, to Desarmoises.

"As soon as you please."

I asked him to dine with me, and we were on our way when we met M. Zeroli and two or three other persons whom I had met at Aix. I gave and

received plenty of compliments, but not wishing to pay them any visits I excused myself on the pretext of business.

When we had finished dinner Desarmoises took me to the horse-dealer's. I asked if he had a good saddle horse. He called a lad and gave his orders, and whilst he was speaking the charming daughter appeared on the scene. She was dazzlingly beautiful, and could not be more than twenty-two. Her figure was as lissom as a nymph's, her hair a raven black, her complexion a meeting of the lily and the rose, her eyes full of fire, her lashes long, and her eye-brows so well arched that they seemed ready to make war on any who would dare the conquest of her charms. All about her betokened an educated mind and knowledge of the world.

I was so absorbed in the contemplation of her charms that I did not notice the horse when it was brought to me. However, I proceeded to scrutinise it, pretending to be an expert, and after feeling the knees and legs, turning back the ears, and looking at the teeth, I tested its behaviour at a walk, a trot, and a gallop, and then told the Jew that I would come and try it myself in top-boots the next day. The horse was a fine dappled bay, and was priced at forty Piedmontese pistoles—about a hundred sequins.

"He is gentleness itself," said Leah, "and he ambles as fast as any other horse trots."

"You have ridden it, then?"

"Often, sir, and if I were rich I would never sell him."

"I won't buy the horse till I have seen you ride it."

She blushed at this.

"You must oblige the gentleman," said her father. She consented to do so, and I promised to come again at nine o'clock the next day.

I was exact to time, as may be imagined, and I found Leah in riding costume. What proportions! What a Venus Callipyge! I was captivated.

Two horses were ready, and she leapt on hers with the ease and grace of a practised rider, and I got up on my horse. We rode together for some distance. The horse went well enough, but what of that; all my eyes were for her.

As we were turning, I said,——

"Fair Leah, I will buy the horse, but as a present for you; and if you will not take it I shall leave Turin to-day. The only condition I attach to the gift is, that you will ride with me whenever I ask you."

I saw she seemed favourably inclined to my proposal, so I told her that I should stay six weeks at Turin, that I had fallen in love with her on the promenade, and that the purchase of the horse had been a mere pretext for discovering to her my feelings. She replied modestly that she was vastly flattered by

the liking I had taken to her, and that I need not have made her such a present to assure myself of her friendship.

"The condition you impose on me is an extremely pleasant one, and I am sure that my father will like me to accept it."

To this she added,——

"All I ask is for you to make me the present before him, repeating that you will only buy it on the condition that I will accept it."

I found the way smoother than I had expected, and I did what she asked me. Her father, whose name was Moses, thought it a good bargain, congratulated his daughter, took the forty pistoles and gave me a receipt, and begged me to do them the honour of breakfasting with them the next day. This was just what I wanted.

The following morning Moses received me with great respect. Leah, who was in her ordinary clothes, told me that if I liked to ride she would put on her riding habit.

"Another day," said I; "to-day I should like to converse with you in your own house."

But the father, who was as greedy as most Jews are, said that if I liked driving he could sell me a pretty phaeton with two excellent horses.

"You must shew them to the gentleman," said Leah, possibly in concert with her father.

Moses said nothing, but went out to get the horses harnessed.

"I will look at them," I said to Leah, "but I won't buy, as I should not know what to do with them."

"You can take your lady-love out for a drive."

"That would be you; but perhaps you would be afraid?"

"Not at all, if you drove in the country or the suburbs."

"Very good, Leah, then I will look at them."

The father came in, and we went downstairs. I liked the carriage and the horses, and I told Leah so.

"Well," said Moses, "you can have them now for four hundred sequins, but after Easter the price will be five hundred sequins at least."

Leah got into the carriage, and I sat beside her, and we went for an hour's drive into the country. I told Moses I would give him an answer by the next day, and he went about his business, while Leah and I went upstairs again.

"It's quite worth four hundred sequins," said I, "and to-morrow I will buy it with pleasure; but on the same condition as that on which I bought the horse, and something more—namely, that you will grant me all the favours that a tender lover can desire."

"You speak plainly, and I will answer you in

the same way. I'm an honest girl, sir, and not for sale."

"All women, dear Leah, whether they are honest or not, are for sale. When a man has plenty of time he buys the woman his heart desires by unremitting attentions; but when he's in a hurry he buys her with presents, and even with money."

"Then he's a clumsy fellow; he would do better to let sentiment and attention plead his cause and gain the victory."

"I wish I could give myself that happiness, fair Leah, but I'm in a great hurry."

As I finished this sentence her father came in, and I left the house telling him that if I could not come the next day I would come the day after, and that we could talk about the phaeton then.

It was plain that Leah thought I was lavish of my money, and would make a capital dupe. She would relish the phaeton, as she had relished the horse, but I knew that I was not quite such a fool as that. It had not cost me much trouble to resolve to chance the loss of a hundred sequins, but beyond that I wanted some value for my money.

I temporarily suspended my visits to see how Leah and her father would settle it amongst themselves. I reckoned on the Jew's greediness to work well for me. He was very fond of money, and must have been angry that his daughter had not made me buy the phaeton by some means or another, for so

long as the phaeton was bought the rest would be perfectly indifferent to him. I felt almost certain that they would come and see me.

The following Saturday I saw the fair Jewess on the promenade. We were near enough for me to accost her without seeming to be anxious to do so, and her look seemed to say, "Come."

"We see no more of you now," said she, "but come and breakfast with me to-morrow, or I will send you back the horse."

I promised to be with her in good time, and, as the reader will imagine, I kept my word.

The breakfast party was almost confined to ourselves, for though her aunt was present she was only there for decency's sake. After breakfast we resolved to have a ride, and she changed her clothes before me, but also before her aunt. She first put on her leather breeches, then let her skirts fall, took off her corset, and donned a jacket. With seeming indifference I succeeded in catching a glimpse of a magnificent breast; but the sly puss knew how much my indifference was worth.

"Will you arrange my frill?" said she.

This was a warm occupation for me, and I am afraid my hand was indiscreet. Nevertheless, I thought I detected a fixed design under all this seeming complaisance, and I was on my guard.

Her father came up just as we were getting on horseback.

"If you will buy the phaeton and horses," said he, "I will abate twenty sequins."

"All that depends on your daughter," said I.

We set off at a walk, and Leah told me that she had been imprudent enough to confess to her father that she could make me buy the carriage, and that if I did not wish to embroil her with him I would be kind enough to purchase it.

"Strike the bargain," said she, "and you can give it me when you are sure of my love."

"My dear Leah, I am your humble servant, but you know on what condition."

"I promise to drive out with you whenever you please, without getting out of the carriage, but I know you would not care for that. No, your affection was only a temporary caprice."

"To convince you of the contrary I will buy the phaeton and put it in a coach-house. I will see that the horses are taken care of, though I shall not use them. But if you do not make me happy in the course of a week I shall re-sell the whole."

"Come to us to-morrow."

"I will do so, but I must have some pledge of your affection this morning."

"This morning? It's impossible."

"Excuse me; I will go upstairs with you, and you can shew me more than one kindness while you are undressing."

We came back, and I was astonished to hear

her telling her father that the phaeton was mine, and all he had to do was to put in the horses. The Jew grinned, and we all went upstairs, and Leah coolly said,—

“Count out the money.”

“I have not any money about me, but I will write you a cheque, if you like.”

“Here is paper.”

I wrote a cheque on Zappata for three hundred sequins, payable at sight. The Jew went off to get the money, and Leah remained alone with me.

“You have trusted me,” she said, “and have thus shewn yourself worthy of my love.”

“Then undress, quick!”

“No, my aunt is about the house; and as I cannot shut the door without exciting suspicion, she might come in; but I promise that you shall be content with me to-morrow. Nevertheless, I am going to undress, but you must go in this closet; you may come back when I have got my woman’s clothes on again.”

I agreed to this arrangement, and she shut me in. I examined the door, and discovered a small chink between the boards. I got on a stool, and saw Leah sitting on a sofa opposite to me engaged in undressing herself. She took off her shift and wiped her breasts and her feet with a towel, and just as she had taken off her breeches, and was as naked as my hand, one of her rings happened to

slip off her finger, and rolled under the sofa. She got up, looked to right and left, and then stooped to search under the sofa, and to do this she had to kneel with her head down. When she got back to the couch, the towel came again into requisition, and she wiped herself all over in such a manner that all her charms were revealed to my eager eyes. I felt sure that she knew I was a witness of all these operations, and she probably guessed what a fire the sight would kindle in my inflammable breast.

At last her toilette was finished, and she let me out. I clasped her in my arms, with the words, "I have seen everything." She pretended not to believe me, so I shewed her the chink, and was going to obtain my just dues, when the accursed Moses came in. He must have been blind or he would have seen the state his daughter had put me in; however, he thanked me, and gave me a receipt for the money, saying, "Everything in my poor house is at your service."

I bade them adieu, and I went away in an ill temper. I got into my phæton, and drove home and told the coachman to find me a stable for the horses and a coach-house for the carriage.

I did not expect to see Leah again, and I felt enraged with her. She had pleased me only too much by her voluptuous attitudes, but she had set up an irritation wholly hostile to Love. She had

made Love a robber, and the hungry boy had consented; but afterwards, when he craved more substantial fare, she refused him, and ardour was succeeded by contempt. Leah did not want to confess herself to be what she really was, and my love would not declare itself knavish.

I made the acquaintance of an amiable chevalier, a soldier, a man of letters, and a great lover of horses, who introduced me to several pleasant families. However, I did not cultivate them, as they only offered me the pleasures of sentiment, while I longed for lustier fare for which I was willing to pay heavily. The Chevalier de Brézé was not the man for me; he was too respectable for a profligate like myself. He bought the phæton and horses, and I only lost thirty sequins by the transaction.

A certain M. Baretti, who had known me at Aix, and had been the Marquis de Prié's croupier, took me to see the Mazzoli, formerly a dancer, and then mistress to the Chevalier Raiberti, a hard-headed but honest man, who was then secretary for foreign affairs. Although the Mazzoli was by no means pretty, she was extremely complaisant, and had several girls at her house for me to see; but I did not think any of them worthy of occupying Leah's place. I fancied I no longer loved Leah, but I was wrong.

The Chevalier Cocona, who had the misfortune to be suffering from a venereal disease, gave me up

his mistress, a pretty little *soubrette*; but in spite of the evidence of my own eyes, and in spite of the assurances she gave me, I could not make up my mind to have her, and my fear made me leave her untouched. Count Trana, a brother of the chevalier's whom I had known at Aix, introduced me to Madame de Sc——, a lady of high rank and very good-looking, but she tried to involve me in a criminal transaction, and I ceased to call on her. Shortly after, Count Trana's uncle died and he became rich and got married, but he lived an unhappy life.

I was getting bored, and Desarmoises, who had all his meals with me, did not know what to do. At last he advised me to make the acquaintance of a certain Madame R——, a Frenchwoman, and well known in Turin as a milliner and dressmaker. She had six or eight girls working for her in a room adjoining her shop. Desarmoises thought that if I got in there I might possibly be able to find one to my taste. As my purse was well furnished I thought I should not have much difficulty, so I called on Madame R——. I was agreeably surprised to find Leah there, bargaining for a quantity of articles, all of which she pronounced to be too dear. She told me kindly but reproachfully that she had thought I must be ill.

"I have been very busy," I said; and felt all my old ardour revive. She asked me to come to a Jewish wedding, where there would be a good many

people and several pretty girls. I knew that ceremonies of this kind are very amusing, and I promised to be present. She proceeded with her bargaining, but the price was still too high and she left the shop. Madame R—— was going to put back all the trifles in their places, but I said,—

“I will take the lot myself.”

She smiled, and I drew out my purse and paid the money.

“Where do you live, sir?” said she; “and when shall I send you your purchases?”

“You may bring them to-morrow yourself, and do me the honour of breakfasting with me.”

“I can never leave the shop, sir.”

In spite of her thirty-five years, Madame R—— was still what would be called a tasty morsel, and she had taken my fancy.

“I want some dark lace,” said I.

“Then kindly follow me, sir.”

I was delighted when I entered the room to see a lot of young work-girls, all charming, hard at work, and scarcely daring to look at me. Madame R—— opened several cupboards, and shewed me some magnificent lace. I was distracted by the sight of so many delicious nymphs, and I told her that I wanted the lace for two *baoutes* in the Venetian style. She knew what I meant. The lace cost me upwards of a hundred sequins. Madame R—— told two of her girls to bring me the lace the next day.

together with the goods which Leah had thought too dear. They meekly replied,—

“Yes, mother.”

They rose and kissed the mother’s hand, which I thought a ridiculous ceremony; however, it gave me an opportunity of examining them, and I thought them delicious. We went back to the shop, and sitting down by the counter I enlarged on the beauty of the girls, adding, though not with strict truth, that I vastly preferred their mistress. She thanked me for the compliment and told me plainly that she had a lover, and soon after named him. He was the Comte de St. Giles, an infirm and elderly man, and by no means a model lover. I thought Madame R—— was jesting, but next day I ascertained that she was speaking the truth. Well, everyone to his taste, and I suspect that she was more in love with the count’s purse than his person. I had met him at the “Exchange” coffeeshouse.

The next day the two pretty milliners brought me my goods. I offered them chocolate, but they firmly and persistently declined. The fancy took me to send them to Leah with all the things she had chosen, and I bade them return and tell me what sort of a reception they had had. They said they would do so, and waited for me to write her a note. I could not give them the slightest mark of affection. I dared not shut the door, and the mistress and the ugly young woman of the house kept going

and coming all the time; but when they came back I waited for them on the stairs, and giving them a sequin each told each of them that she might command my heart if she would. Leah had accepted my handsome present and sent to say that she was waiting for me.

As I was walking aimlessly about in the afternoon I happened to pass the milliner's shop, and Madame R—— saw me and made me come in and sit down beside her.

"I am really much obliged to you," said she, "for your kindness to my girls. They came home enchanted. Tell me frankly whether you are really in love with the pretty Jewess."

"I am really in love with her, but as she will not make me happy I have signed my own dismissal."

"You were quite right. All Leah thinks of is duping those who are captivated by her charms."

"Do not your charming apprentices follow your maxims?"

"No; but they are only complaisant when I give them leave."

"Then I commend myself to your intercession, for they would not even take a cup of chocolate from me."

"They were perfectly right not to accept your chocolate: but I see you do not know the ways of Turin. Do you find yourself comfortable in your present lodging?"

"Quite so."

"Are you perfectly free to do what you like?"

"I think so."

"Can you give supper to anyone you like in your own rooms? I am certain you can't."

"I have not had the opportunity of trying the experiment so far, but I believe. . . ."

"Don't flatter yourself by believing anything; that house is full of the spies of the police."

"Then you think that I could not give you and two or three of your girls a little supper?"

"I should take very good care not to go to it, that's all I know. By next morning it would be known to all the town, and especially to the police."

"Well, supposing I look out for another lodging?"

"It's the same everywhere. Turin is a perfect nest of spies; but I do know a house where you could live at your ease, and where my girls might perhaps be able to bring you your purchases. But we should have to be very careful."

"Where is the house? I will be guided by you in everything."

"Don't trust a Piedmontese; that's the first commandment here."

She then gave me the address of a small furnished house, which was only inhabited by an old door-keeper and his wife.

"They will let it you by the month," said she,

“and if you pay a month in advance you need not even tell them your name.”

I found the house to be a very pretty one, standing in a lonely street at about two hundred paces from the citadel. One gate, large enough to admit a carriage, led into the country. I found everything to be as Madame R—— had described it. I paid a month in advance without any bargaining, and in a day I had settled in my new lodging. Madame R—— admired my celerity.

I went to the Jewish wedding and enjoyed myself, for there is something at once solemn and ridiculous about the ceremony; but I resisted all Leah's endeavours to get me once more into her meshes. I hired a close carriage from her father, which with the horses I placed in the coach-house and stables of my new house. Thus I was absolutely free to go wherever I would by night or by day, for I was at once in the town and in the country. I was obliged to tell the inquisitive Gama where I was living, and I hid nothing from Desarmoises, whose needs made him altogether dependent on me. Nevertheless I gave orders that my door was shut to them as to everyone else, unless I had given special instructions that they were to be admitted. I had no reason to doubt the fidelity of my two servants.

In this blissful abode I enjoyed all Mdle. R——'s girls, one after the other. The one I wanted always brought a companion, whom I usually sent

back after giving her a slice of the cake. The last of them, whose name was Victorine, as fair as day and as soft as a dove, had the misfortune to be *tied*, though she knew nothing about it. Mdlle. R——, who was equally ignorant on the subject, had represented her to me as a virgin, and so I thought her for two long hours in which I strove with might and main to break the charm, or rather open the shell. All my efforts were in vain. I was exhausted at last, and I wanted to see in what the obstacle consisted. I put her in the proper position, and armed with a candle I began my scrutiny. I found a fleshy membrane pierced by so small a hole that a large pin's head could scarcely have gone through. Victorine encouraged me to force a passage with my little finger, but in vain I tried to pierce this wall, which nature had made impassable by all ordinary means. I was tempted to see what I could do with a bistoury, and the girl wanted me to try, but I was afraid of the hæmorrhage which might have been dangerous, and I wisely refrained.

Poor Victorine, condemned to die a maid, unless some clever surgeon performed the same operation that was undergone by Mdlle. Cheruffini shortly after M. Lepri married her, wept when I said,——

“My dear child, your little Hymen defies the most vigorous lover to enter his temple.”

But I consoled her by saying that a good surgeon could easily make a perfect woman of her.

In the morning I told Madame R—— of the case. She laughed and said,—

“It may prove a happy accident for Victorine; it may make her fortune.”

A few years after the Count of Padua had her operated on, and made her fortune. When I came back from Spain I found that she was with child, so that I could not exact the due reward for all the trouble I had taken with her.

Early in the morning on Maunday Thursday they told me that Moses and Leah wanted to see me. I had not expected to see them, but I welcomed them warmly. Throughout Holy Week the Jews dared not shew themselves in the streets of Turin, and I advised them to stay with me till the Saturday. Moses began to try and get me to purchase a ring from him, and I judged from that that I should not have to press them very much.

“I can only buy this ring from Leah’s hands,” said I.

He grinned, thinking doubtless that I intended to make her a present of it, but I was resolved to disappoint him. I gave them a magnificent dinner and supper, and in the evening they were shewn a double-bedded room not far from mine. I might have put them in different rooms, and Leah in a room adjoining mine, which would have facilitated any nocturnal excursions; but after all I had done for

her I was resolved to owe nothing to a surprise; she should come of herself.

The next day Moses (who noticed that I had not yet bought the ring) was obliged to go out on business, and asked for the loan of my carriage for the whole day, telling me that he would come for his daughter in the evening. I had the horses harnessed, and when he was gone I bought the ring for six hundred sequins, but on my own terms. I was in my own house, and Leah could not deceive me. As soon as the father was safely out of the way I possessed myself of the daughter. She proved a docile and amorous subject the whole day. I had reduced her to a state of nature, and though her body was as perfect as can well be imagined I used it and abused it in every way imaginable. In the evening her father found her looking rather tired, but he seemed as pleased as I was. Leah was not quite so well satisfied, for till the moment of their departure she was expecting me to give her the ring, but I contented myself with saying that I should like to reserve myself the pleasure of taking it to her.

On Easter Monday a man brought me a note summoning me to appear at the police office.

CHAPTER XII

MY VICTORY OVER THE DEPUTY CHIEF OF POLICE—
MY DEPARTURE—C H A M B É R I—DESARMOISES'S
DAUGHTER—M. MORIN—M * * * M * * * AT AIX
—THE YOUNG BOARDER—LYONS—PARIS

THIS citation, which did not promise to lead to anything agreeable, surprised and displeased me exceedingly. However, I could not avoid it, so I drove to the office of the deputy-superintendent of police. I found him sitting at a long table, surrounded by about a score of people in a standing posture. He was a man of sixty, hideously ugly, his enormous nose half destroyed by an ulcer hidden by a large black silk plaster, his mouth of huge dimensions, his lips thick, with small green eyes and eyebrows which had partly turned white. As soon as this disgusting fellow saw me, he began,——

“You are the Chevalier de Seingalt?”

“That is my name, and I have come here to ask how I can oblige you?”

“I have summoned you here to order you to leave the place in three days at latest.”

“And as you have no right to give such an order,

I have come here to tell you that I shall go when I please, and not before."

"I will expel you by force."

"You may do that whenever you please. I cannot resist force, but I trust you will give the matter a second thought; for in a well-ordered city they do not expel a man who has committed no crimes, and has a balance of a hundred thousand francs at the bank."

"Very good, but in three days you have plenty of time to pack up and arrange matters with your banker. I advise you to obey, as the command comes from the king."

"If I were to leave the town I should become accessory to your injustice! I will not obey, but since you mention the king's name, I will go to his majesty at once, and he will deny your words or revoke the unjust order you have given me with such publicity."

"Pray, does not the king possess the power to make you go?"

"Yes, by force, but not by justice. He has also the power to kill me, but he would have to provide the executioner, as he could not make me commit suicide."

"You argue well, but nevertheless you will obey."

"I argue well, but I did not learn the art from you, and I will not obey."

With these words I turned my back on him, and left without another word.

I was in a furious rage. I felt inclined to offer overt resistance to all the myrmidons of the infamous superintendent. Nevertheless I soon calmed myself, and summoning prudence to my aid I remembered the Chevalier Raiberti, whom I had seen at his mistress's house, and I decided on asking his advice. He was the chief permanent official in the department of foreign affairs. I told the coachman to drive to his house, and I recounted to him the whole tale, saying, finally, that I should like to speak to the king, as I was resolved that I would not go unless I was forced to do so. The worthy man advised me to go to the Chevalier Osorio, the principal secretary for foreign affairs, who could always get an audience of the king. I was pleased with his advice, and I went immediately to the minister, who was a Sicilian and a man of parts. He gave me a very good reception, and after I had informed him of the circumstances of the case I begged him to communicate the matter to his majesty, adding that as the superintendent's order appeared horribly unjust to me I was resolved not to obey it unless compelled to do so by main force. He promised to oblige me in the way I wished, and told me to call again the next day.

After leaving him I took a short walk to cool myself, and then went to the Abbé Gama, hoping to be the first to impart my ridiculous adventure to him.

I was disappointed; he already knew that I had been ordered to go, and how I had answered the superintendent. When he saw that I persisted in my determination to resist, he did not condemn my firmness, though he must have thought it very extraordinary, for the good abbé could not understand anybody's disobeying the order of the authorities. He assured me that if I had to go he would send me the necessary instructions to any address I liked to name.

The next day the Chevalier Osorio received me with the utmost politeness, which I thought a good omen. The Chevalier Raiberti had spoken to him in my behalf, and he had laid the matter before the king and also before the Count d'Aglié, and the result was that I could stay as long as I liked. The Count d'Aglié was none other than the horrible superintendent. I was told that I must wait on him, and he would give me leave to remain at Turin till my affairs were settled.

"My only business here," said I, "is to spend my money till I have instructions from the Court of Portugal to attend the Congress of Augsburg on behalf of his most faithful majesty."

"Then you think that this Congress will take place?"

"Nobody doubts it."

"Somebody believes it will all end in smoke. However, I am delighted to have been of service to

you, and I shall be curious to hear what sort of reception you get from the superintendent."

I felt ill at ease. I went to the police office immediately, glad to shew myself victorious, and anxious to see how the superintendent would look when I came in. However, I could not flatter myself that he looked ashamed of himself; these people have a brazen forehead, and do not know what it is to blush.

As soon as he saw me, he began,——

"The Chevalier Osorio tells me that you have business in Turin which will keep you for some days. You may therefore stay, but you must tell me as nearly as possible how long a time you require."

"I cannot possibly tell you that."

"Why? if you don't mind telling me."

"I am awaiting instructions from the Court of Portugal to attend the Congress to be held at Augsburg, and before I could tell you how long I shall have to stay I should be compelled to ask his most faithful majesty. If this time is not sufficient for me to do my business, I will intimate the fact to you."

"I shall be much obliged by your doing so."

This time I made him a bow, which was returned, and on leaving the office I returned to the Chevalier Osorio, who said, with a smile, that I had caught the superintendent, as I had taken an indefinite period, which left me quite at my ease.

The diplomatic Gama, who firmly believed that

the Congress would meet, was delighted when I told him that the Chevalier Osorio was incredulous on the subject. He was charmed to think his wit keener than the minister's; it exalted him in his own eyes. I told him that whatever the chevalier might say I would go to Augsburg, and that I would set out in three or four weeks.

Madame R—— congratulated me over and over again, for she was enchanted that I had humiliated the superintendent; but all the same we thought we had better give up our little suppers. As I had had a taste of all her girls, this was not such a great sacrifice for me to make.

I continued thus till the middle of May, when I left Turin, after receiving letters from the Abbé Gama to Lord Stormont, who was to represent England at the approaching congress. It was with this nobleman that I was to work in concert at the Congress.

Before going to Germany I wanted to see Madame d'Urfé, and I wrote to her, asking her to send me a letter of introduction to M. de Rochebaron, who might be useful to me. I also asked M. Raiberti to give me a letter for Chambéri, where I wanted to visit the divine M—— M—— (of whom I still thought with affection) at her convent grating. I wrote to my friend Valenglard, asking him to remind Madame Morin that she had promised to shew me a likeness to somebody at Chambéri.

But here I must note down an event worthy of being recorded, which was extremely prejudicial to me.

Five or six days before my departure Desarmois came to me looking very downcast, and told me that he had been ordered to leave Turin in twenty-four hours.

"Do you know why?" I asked him.

"Last night when I was at the coffee-house, Count Scarnafis dared to say that France subsidised the Berne newspapers. I told him he lied, at which he rose and left the place in a rage, giving me a glance the meaning of which is not doubtful. I followed him to bring him to reason or to give him satisfaction; but he would do nothing, and I suspect he went to the police to complain. I shall have to leave Turin early to-morrow morning."

"You're a Frenchman, and as you can claim the protection of your ambassador you will be wrong to leave so suddenly."

"In the first place the ambassador is away, and in the second my cruel father disavows me. No, I would rather go, and wait for you at Lyons. All I want is for you to lend me a hundred crowns, for which I will give you an account."

"It will be an easy account to keep," said I, "but a long time before it is settled."

"Possibly; but if it is in my power I will shew my gratitude for the kindnesses you have done me."

I gave him a hundred crowns and wished him a pleasant journey, telling him that I should stop some time at Lyons.

I got a letter of credit on an Augsburg house, and three days after I left Turin I was at Chambéri. There was only one inn there in those days, so I was not much puzzled to choose where I would go, but for all that I found myself very comfortable.

As I entered my room, I was struck by seeing an extremely pretty girl coming out of an adjacent room.

"Who is that young lady?" said I to the chamber-maid who was escorting me.

"That's the wife of a young gentleman who has to keep his bed to get cured of a sword-thrust which he received four days ago on his way from France."

I could not look at her without feeling the sting of concupiscence. As I was leaving my room I saw the door half open, and I stopped short and offered my services as a neighbour. She thanked me politely, and asked me in. I saw a handsome young man sitting up in bed, so I went up to enquire how he felt.

"The doctor will not let him talk," said the young lady, "on account of a sword-thrust in the chest he received at half a league from here. We hope he will be all right in a few days, and then we can continue our journey."

"Where are you going, madam?"

“To Geneva.”

Just as I was leaving, a maid came to ask me if I would take supper in my own room or with the lady. I laughed at her stupidity, and said I would sup in my own apartment, adding that I had not the honour of the lady's acquaintance.

At this the young lady said it would give her great pleasure if I would sup with her, and the husband repeated this assurance in a whisper. I accepted the invitation gratefully, and I thought that they were really pleased. The lady escorted me out as far as the stairs, and I took the liberty of kissing her hand, which in France is a declaration of tender though respectful affection.

At the post-office I found a letter from Valenglard, telling me that Madame Morin would wait on me at Chambéri if I would send her a carriage, and another from Desarmoises dated from Lyons. He told me that as he was on his way from Chambéri he had encountered his daughter in company with a rascal who had carried her off. He had buried his sword in his body, and would have killed them if he had been able to stop their carriage. He suspected that they had been staying in Chambéri, and he begged me to try and persuade his daughter to return to Lyons; and he added that if she would not do so I ought to oblige him by sending her back by force. He assured me that they were not married,

and he begged me to answer his letter by express, for which purpose he sent me his address.

I guessed at once that this daughter of his was my fair neighbour, but I did not feel at all inclined to come to the aid of the father in the way he wished.

As soon as I got back to the inn I sent off Le Duc in a travelling carriage to Madame Morin, whom I informed by letter that as I was only at Chambéri for her sake I would await her convenience. This done, I abandoned myself to the delight I felt at the romantic adventure which fortune had put in my way.

I respected Mdlle. Desarmoises and her ravisher, and I did not care to enquire whether I was impelled in what I did by virtue or vice; but I could not help perceiving that my motives were of a mixed nature; for if I were amorous, I was also very glad to be of assistance to two young lovers, and all the more from my knowledge of the father's criminal passion.

On entering their room I found the invalid in the surgeon's hands. He pronounced the wound not to be dangerous, in spite of its depth; suppuration had taken place without setting up inflammation—in short, the young man only wanted time and rest. When the doctor had gone I congratulated the patient on his condition, advising him to be careful what he ate, and to keep silent. I then gave Mdlle

Desarmoises her father's letter, and I said farewell for the present, telling them that I would go to my own room till supper-time. I felt sure that she would come and speak to me after reading her father's letter.

In a quarter of an hour she knocked timidly at my door, and when I let her in she gave me back the letter and asked me what I thought of doing.

"Nothing. I shall be only too happy, however, if I can be of any service to you."

"Ah! I breathe again!"

"Could you imagine me pursuing any other line of conduct? I am much interested in you, and will do all in my power to help you. Are you married?"

"Not yet, but we are going to be married when we get to Geneva."

"Sit down and tell me all about yourself. I know that your father is unhappily in love with you, and that you avoid his attentions."

"He has told you that much? I am glad of it. A year ago he came to Lyons, and as soon as I knew he was in the town I took refuge with a friend of my mother's, for I was aware that I could not stay in the same house with my father for an hour without exposing myself to the most horrible outrage. The young man in bed is the son of a rich Geneva merchant. My father introduced him to me two years ago, and we soon fell in love with each other. My father went away to Marseilles, and my lover asked

my mother to give me in marriage to him; but she did not feel authorized to do so without my father's consent. She wrote and asked him, but he replied that he would announce his decision when he returned to Lyons. My lover went to Geneva, and as his father approved of the match he returned with all the necessary documents and a strong letter of commendation from M. Tolosan. When my father came to Lyons I escaped, as I told you, and my lover got M. Tolosan to ask my hand for him of my father. His reply was, 'I can give no answer till she returns to my house!' M. Tolosan brought this reply to me, and I told him that I was ready to obey if my mother would guarantee my safety. She replied, however, that she knew her husband too well to dare to have us both under the same roof. Again did M. Tolosan endeavour to obtain my father's consent, but to no purpose. A few days after he left Lyons, telling us that he was first going to Aix and then to Turin, and as it was evident that he would never give his consent my lover proposed that I should go off with him, promising to marry me as soon as we reached Geneva. By ill luck we travelled through Savoy, and thus met my father. As soon as he saw us he stopped the carriage and called to me to get out. I began to shriek, and my lover taking me in his arms to protect me my father stabbed him in the chest. No doubt he would have killed him, but seeing that my shrieks were bringing people

to our rescue, and probably believing that my lover was as good as dead, he got on horseback again and rode off at full speed. I can shew you the sword still covered with blood."

"I am obliged to answer this letter of his, and I am thinking how I can obtain his consent."

"That's of no consequence; we can marry and be happy without it."

"True, but you ought not to despise your dower."

"Good heavens! what dower? He has no money."

"But on the death of his father, the Marquis Desarmoises. . . ."

"That's all a lie. My father has only a small yearly pension for having served thirty years as a Government messenger. His father has been dead these thirty years, and my mother and my sister only live by the work they do."

I was thunderstruck at the impudence of the fellow, who, after imposing on me so long, had himself put me in a position to discover his deceit. I said nothing. Just then we were told that supper was ready, and we sat at table for three hours talking the matter over. The poor wounded man had only to listen to me to know my feelings on the subject. His young mistress, as witty as she was pretty, jested on the foolish passion of her father, who had loved her madly ever since she was eleven.

"And you were always able to resist his attempts?" said I.

"Yes, whenever he pushed things too far."

"And how long did this state of things continue?"

"For two years. When I was thirteen he thought I was ripe, and tried to gather the fruit; but I began to shriek, and escaped from his bed stark naked, and I went to take refuge with my mother, who from that day forth would not let me sleep with him again."

"You used to sleep with him? How could your mother allow it?"

"She never thought that there was anything criminal in his affection for me, and I knew nothing about it. I thought that what he did to me, and what he made me do to him, were mere trifles."

"But you have saved the little treasure?"

"I have kept it for my lover."

The poor lover, who was suffering more from the effects of hunger than from his wounds, laughed at this speech of hers, and she ran to him and covered his face with kisses. All this excited me intensely. Her story had been told with too much simplicity not to move me, especially when I had her before my eyes, for she possessed all the attractions which a woman can have, and I almost forgave her father for forgetting she was his daughter and falling in love with her.

When she escorted me back to my room I made her feel my emotion, and she began to laugh; but as my servants were close by I was obliged to let her go.

Early next morning I wrote to her father that his daughter had resolved not to leave her lover, who was only slightly wounded, that they were in perfect safety and under the protection of the law at Chambéri, and finally that having heard their story, and judging them to be well matched, I could only approve of the course they had taken. When I had finished I went into their room and gave them the letter to read, and seeing the fair runaway at a loss how to express her gratitude, I begged the invalid to let me kiss her.

“Begin with me,” said he, opening his arms.

My hypocritical love masked itself under the guise of paternal affection. I embraced the lover, and then more amorously I performed the same office for the mistress, and shewed them my purse full of gold, telling them it was at their service. While this was going on the surgeon came in, and I retired to my room.

At eleven o'clock Madame Morin and her daughter arrived, preceded by Le Duc on horseback, who announced their approach by numerous smacks of his whip. I welcomed her with open arms, thanking for her obliging me.

The first piece of news she gave me was that

Mdlle. Roman had become mistress to Louis XV., that she lived in a beautiful house at Passy, and that she was five months gone with child. Thus she was in a fair way to become queen of France, as my divine oracle had predicted.

"At Grenoble," she added, "you are the sole topic of conversation; and I advise you not to go there unless you wish to settle in the country, for they would never let you go. You would have all the nobility at your feet, and above all, the ladies anxious to know the lot of their daughters. Everybody believes in judicial astrology now, and Valenglard triumphs. He has bet a hundred louis to fifty that my niece will be delivered of a young prince, and he is certain of winning; though to be sure, if he loses, everybody will laugh at him."

"Don't be afraid of his losing."

"Is it quite certain?"

"Has not the horoscope proved truthful in the principal particular? If the other circumstances do not follow, I must have made a great mistake in my calculations."

"I am delighted to hear you say so."

"I am going to Paris and I hope you will give me a letter of introduction to Madame Varnier, so that I may have the pleasure of seeing your niece."

"You shall have the letter to-morrow without fail."

I introduced Mdlle. Desarmoises to her under
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the family name of her lover, and invited her to dine with Madame Morin and myself. After dinner we went to the convent, and M—— M—— came down very surprised at this unexpected visit from her aunt; but when she saw me she had need of all her presence of mind. When her aunt introduced me to her by name, she observed with true feminine tact that during her stay at Aix she had seen me five or six times at the fountain, but that I could not remember her features as she had always worn her veil. I admired her wit as much as her exquisite features. I thought she had grown prettier than ever, and no doubt my looks told her as much. We spent an hour in talking about Grenoble and her old friends, whom she gladly recalled to her memory, and then she went to fetch a young girl who was boarding at the convent, whom she liked and wanted to present to her aunt.

I seized the opportunity of telling Madame Morin that I was astonished at the likeness, that her very voice was like that of my Venetian M—— M——, and I begged her to obtain me the privilege of breakfasting with her niece the next day, and of presenting her with a dozen pounds of capital chocolate. I had brought it with me from Genoa.

“You must make her the present yourself,” said Madame Morin, “for though she’s a nun she’s a woman, and we women much prefer a present from a man’s than from a woman’s hand.”

M—— M—— returned with the superior of the convent, two other nuns, and the young boarder, who came from Lyons, and was exquisitely beautiful. I was obliged to talk to all the nuns, and Madame Morin told her niece that I wanted her to try some excellent chocolate I had brought from Genoa, but that I hoped her lay-sister would make it.

“Sir,” said M—— M——, “kindly send me the chocolate, and to-morrow we will breakfast together with these dear sisters.”

As soon as I got back to my inn I sent the chocolate with a respectful note, and I took supper in Madame Morin’s room with her daughter and Mdlle. Desarmoises, of whom I was feeling more and more amorous, but I talked of M—— M—— all the time, and I could see that the aunt suspected that the pretty nun was not altogether a stranger to me.

I breakfasted at the convent and I remember that the chocolate, the biscuits, and the sweetmeats were served with a nicety which savoured somewhat of the world. When we had finished breakfast I told M—— M—— that she would not find it so easy to give me a dinner, with twelve persons sitting down to table, but I added that half the company could be in the convent and half in the parlour, separated from the convent by a light grating.

“It’s a sight I should like to see,” said I, “if you will allow me to pay all expenses.”

"Certainly," replied M—— M——, and this dinner was fixed for the next day.

M—— M—— took charge of the whole thing, and promised to ask six nuns. Madame Morin, who knew my tastes, told her to spare nothing, and I warned her that I would send in the necessary wines.

I escorted Madame Morin, her daughter, and Mdlle. Desarmoises back to the hotel, and I then called on M. Magnan, to whom I had been recommended by the Chevalier Raiberti. I asked him to get me some of the best wine, and he took me down to his cellar, and told me to take what I liked. His wines proved to be admirable.

This M. Magnan was a clever man, of a pleasant appearance, and very comfortably off. He occupied an extremely large and convenient house outside the town, and there his agreeable wife dispensed hospitality. She had ten children, amongst whom there were four pretty daughters; the eldest, who was nineteen, was especially good-looking.

We went to the convent at eleven o'clock, and after an hour's conversation we were told that dinner was ready. The table was beautifully laid, covered with a fair white cloth, and adorned with vases filled with artificial flowers so strongly scented that the air of the parlour was quite balmy. The fatal grill was heavier than I had hoped. I found myself seated to the left of M—— M——, and totally unable to see her. The fair Desarmoises was at my right,

and she entertained us all the time with her amusing stories.

We in the parlour were waited on by Le Duc and Costa, and the nuns were served by their lay-sisters. The abundant provision, the excellent wines, the pleasant though sometimes equivocal conversation, kept us all merrily employed for three hours. Mirth had the mastery over reason, or, to speak more plainly, we were all drunk; and if it had not been for the fatal grill, I could have had the whole eleven ladies without much trouble. The young Desarmois was so gay, indeed, that if I had not restrained her she would probably have scandalised all the nuns, who would have liked nothing better. I was longing to have her to myself, that I might quench the flame she had kindled in my breast, and I had no doubt of my success on the first attempt. After coffee had been served, we went into another parlour and stayed there till night came on. Madame Morin took leave of her niece, and the hand-shakings, thanks, and promises of remembrance between me and the nuns, lasted for a good quarter of an hour. After I had said aloud to M—— M—— that I hoped to have the pleasure of seeing her before I left, we went back to the inn in high good humour with our curious party which I still remember with pleasure.

Madame Morin gave me a letter for her cousin Madame Varnier, and I promised to write to her from Paris, and tell her all about the fair Mdle.

Roman. I presented the daughter with a beautiful pair of ear-rings, and I gave Madame Morin twelve pounds of good chocolate which M. Magnan got me, and which the lady thought had come from Genoa. She went off at eight o'clock preceded by Le Duc, who had orders to greet the door-keeper's family on my behalf.

At Magnan's I had a dinner worthy of Lucullus, and I promised to stay with him whenever I passed Chambéri, which promise I have faithfully performed.

On leaving the gourmand's I went to the convent, and M—— M—— came down alone to the grating. She thanked me for coming to see her, and added that I had come to disturb her peace of mind.

"I am quite ready, dearest, to climb the garden wall, and I shall do it more dexterously than your wretched humpback."

"Alas! that may not be, for, trust me, you are already spied upon. Everybody here is sure that we knew each other at Aix. Let us forget all, and thus spare ourselves the torments of vain desires."

"Give me your hand."

"No. All is over. I love you still, probably I shall always love you; but I long for you to go, and by doing so, you will give me a proof of your love."

"This is dreadful; you astonish me. You appear to me in perfect health, you are prettier than

ever, you are made for the worship of the sweetest of the gods, and I can't understand how, with a temperament like yours, you can live in continual abstinence."

"Alas! lacking the reality we console ourselves by pretending. I will not conceal from you that I love my young boarder. It is an innocent passion, and keeps my mind calm. Her caresses quench the flame which would otherwise kill me."

"And that is not against your conscience?"

"I do not feel any distress on the subject."

"But you know it is a sin."

"Yes, so I confess it."

"And what does the confessor say?"

"Nothing. He absolves me, and I am quite content."

"And does the pretty boarder confess, too?"

"Certainly, but she does not tell the father of a matter which she thinks is no sin."

"I wonder the confessor has not taught her, for that kind of instruction is a great pleasure."

"Our confessor is a wise old man."

"Am I to leave you, then, without a single kiss?"

"Not one."

"May I come again to-morrow? I must go the day after."

"You may come, but I cannot see you by myself as the nuns might talk. I will bring my little one

with me to save appearances. Come after dinner, but into the other parlour."

If I had not known M—— M—— at Aix, her religious ideas would have astonished me; but such was her character. She loved God, and did not believe that the kind Father who made us with passions would be too severe because we had not the strength to subdue them. I returned to the inn, feeling vexed that the pretty nun would have no more to do with me, but sure of consolation from the fair Desarmoises.

I found her sitting on her lover's bed; his poor diet and the fever had left him in a state of great weakness. She told me that she would sup in my room to leave him in quiet, and the worthy young man shook my hand in token of his gratitude.

As I had a good dinner at Magnan's I ate very little supper, but my companion who had only had a light meal ate and drank to an amazing extent. I gazed at her in a kind of wonder, and she enjoyed my astonishment. When my servants had left the room I challenged her to drink a bowl of punch with me, and this put her into a mood which asked for nothing but laughter, and which laughed to find itself deprived of reasoning power. Nevertheless, I cannot accuse myself of taking an advantage of her condition, for in her voluptuous excitement she entered eagerly into the pleasure to which I excited

her till two o'clock in the morning. By the time we separated we were both of us exhausted.

I slept till eleven, and when I went to wish her good day I found her smiling and as fresh as a rose. I asked her how she had passed the rest of the night.

"Very pleasantly," said she, "like the beginning of the night."

"What time would you like to have dinner?"

"I won't dine; I prefer to keep my appetite for supper."

Here her lover joined in, saying in a weak voice,——

"It is impossible to keep up with her."

"In eating or drinking?" I asked.

"In eating, drinking, and in other things," he replied, with a smile. She laughed, and kissed him affectionately.

This short dialogue convinced me that Mdlle. Desarmoises must adore her lover; for besides his being a handsome young man, his disposition was exactly suitable to hers. I dined by myself, and Le Duc came in as I was having dessert. He told me that the door-keeper's daughters and their pretty cousin had made him wait for them to write to me, and he gave me three letters and three dozen of gloves which they had presented to me. The letters urged me to come and spend a month with them, and gave me to understand that I should be well pleased with my treatment. I had not the courage to re-

turn to a town, where with my reputation I should have been obliged to draw horoscopes for all the young ladies or to make enemies by refusing.

After I had read the letters from Grenoble I went to the convent and announced my presence, and then entered the parlour which M—— M—— had indicated. She soon came down with the pretty boarder, who feebly sustained my part in her amorous ecstasies. She had not yet completed her twelfth year, but she was extremely tall and well developed for her age. Gentleness, liveliness, candour, and wit were united in her features, and gave her expression an exquisite charm. She wore a well-made corset which disclosed a white throat, to which the fancy easily added the two spheres which would soon appear there. Her entrancing face, her raven locks, and her ivory throat indicated what might be concealed, and my vagrant imagination made her into a budding Venus. I began by telling her that she was very pretty, and would make her future husband a happy man. I knew she would blush at that. It may be cruel, but it is thus that the language of seduction always begins. A girl of her age who does not blush at the mention of marriage is either an idiot or already an expert in profligacy. In spite of this, however, the blush which mounts to a young girl's cheek at the approach of such ideas is a puzzling problem. Whence does it arise? It may be from pure simplicity, it may be from shame, and often from a

mixture of both feelings. Then comes the fight between vice and virtue, and it is usually virtue which has to give in. The desires—the servants of vice—usually attain their ends. As I knew the young boarder from M—— M——’s description, I could not be ignorant of the source of those blushes which added a fresh attraction to her youthful charms.

Pretending not to notice anything, I talked to M—— M—— for a few moments, and then returned to the assault. She had regained her calm.

“What age are you, pretty one?” said I.

“I am thirteen.”

“You are wrong,” said M—— M——, “you have not yet completed your twelfth year.”

“The time will come,” said I, “when you will diminish the tale of your years instead of increasing it.”

“I shall never tell a lie, sir; I am sure of that.”

“So you want to be a nun, do you?”

“I have not yet received my vocation; but even if I live in the world I need not be a liar.”

“You are wrong; you will begin to lie as soon as you have a lover.”

“Will my lover tell lies, too?”

“Certainly he will.”

“If the matter were really so, then, I should have a bad opinion of love; but I do not believe it, for I love my sweetheart here, and I never conceal the truth from her.”

"Yes, but loving a man is a different thing to loving a woman."

"No, it isn't; it's just the same."

"Not so, for you do not go to bed with a woman and you do with your husband."

"That's no matter, my love would be the same."

"What? You would not rather sleep with me than with M—— M——?"

"No, indeed I should not, because you are a man and would see me."

"You don't want a man to see you, then?"

"No."

"Do you think you are so ugly, then?"

At this she turned to M—— M—— and said, with evident vexation, "I am not really ugly, am I?"

"No, darling," said M—— M——, bursting with laughter, "it is quite the other way; you are very pretty." With these words she took her on her knee and embraced her tenderly.

"Your corset is too tight; you can't possibly have such a small waist as that."

"You make a mistake, you can put your hand there and see for yourself."

"I can't believe it."

M—— M—— then held her close to the grill and told me to see for myself. At the same moment she turned up her dress.

"You were right," said I, "and I owe you an

apology;" but in my heart I cursed the grating and the chemise.

"My opinion is," said I to M—— M——, "that we have here a little boy."

I did not wait for a reply, but satisfied myself by my sense of touch as to her sex, and I could see that the little one and her governess were both pleased that my mind was at rest on the subject.

I drew my hand away, and the little girl looked at M—— M——, and reassured by her smiling air asked if she might go away for a moment. I must have reduced her to a state in which a moment's solitude was necessary, and I myself was in a very excited condition.

As soon as she was gone I said to M—— M——:

"Do you know that what you have shewn me has made me unhappy?"

"Has it? Why?"

"Because your boarder is charming, and I am longing to enjoy her."

"I am sorry for that, for you can't possibly go any further; and besides, I know you, and even if you could satisfy your passion without danger to her, I would not give her up to you, you would spoil her."

"How?"

"Do you think that after enjoying you she would care to enjoy me? I should lose too heavily by the comparison."

"Give me your hand."

"No."

"Stay, one moment."

"I don't want to see anything."

"Not a little bit?"

"Nothing at all."

"Are you angry with me, then?"

"Not at all. If you have been pleased I am glad, and if you have filled her with desires she will love me all the better."

"How pleasant it would be, sweetheart, if we could all three of us be together alone and at liberty!"

"Yes; but it is impossible."

"Are you sure that no inquisitive eye is looking upon us?"

"Quite sure."

"The height of that fatal grill has deprived me of the sight of many charms."

"Why didn't you go to the other parlour; it is much lower there."

"Let us go there, then."

"Not to-day; I should not be able to give any reason for the change."

"I will come again to-morrow, and start for Lyons in the evening."

The little boarder came back, and I stood up facing her. I had a number of beautiful seals and trinkets hanging from my watch-chain, and I had not had the time to put myself in a state of perfect

decency again. She noticed it, and by way of pretext she asked if she might look at them.

"As long as you like; you may look at them and touch them as well."

M—— M—— foresaw what would happen and left the room, saying that she would soon be back. I hastened to deprive the young boarder of all interest in my seals by shewing her a curiosity of another kind. She did not conceal her pleasure in satisfying her inquisitiveness on an object which was quite new to her, and which she was able to examine minutely for the first time in her life. But soon an effusion changed her curiosity into surprise, and I did not interrupt her in her delighted gaze.

I saw M—— M—— coming back slowly, and I lowered my shirt again, and sat down. My watch and chains were still on the ledge of the grating, and M—— M—— asked her young friend if the trinkets had pleased her.

"Yes," she replied, but in a dreamy and melancholy voice. She had learnt so much in the course of less than two hours that she had plenty to think over. I spent the rest of the day in telling M—— M—— the adventures I had encountered since I had left her; but as I had not time to finish my tale I promised to return the next day at the same time.

The little girl, who had been listening to me all the time, though I appeared to be only addressing her friend, said that she longed to know the end of

my adventure with the Duke of Matelone's mistress.

I supped with the fair Desarmoises, and after giving her sundry proofs of my affection till midnight, and telling her that I only stopped on for her sake, I went to bed. The next day after dinner I returned to the convent, and having sent up my name to M—— M—— I centered the room where the grating was more convenient.

Before long M—— M—— arrived alone, but she anticipated my thoughts by telling me that her pretty friend would soon join her.

"You have fired her imagination. She has told me all about it, playing a thousand wanton tricks, and calling me her dear husband. You have seduced the girl, and I am very glad you are going or else you would drive her mad. You will see how she has dressed herself."

"Are you sure of her discretion?"

"Perfectly, but I hope you won't do anything in my presence. When I see the time coming I will leave the room."

"You are an angel, dearest, but you might be something better than that if you would——"

"I want nothing for myself; it is out of the question."

"You could——"

"No, I will have nothing to do with a pastime which would rekindle fires that are hardly yet

quenched. I have spoken; I suffer, but let us say no more about it."

At this moment the young adept came in smiling, with her eyes full of fire. She was dressed in a short pelisse, open in front, and an embroidered muslin skirt which did not go beyond her knees. She looked like a sylph.

We had scarcely sat down when she reminded me of the place where my tale had stopped. I continued my recital, and when I was telling them how Donna Lucrezia shewed me Leonilda naked, M—— M—— went out, and the sly little puss asked me how I assured myself that my daughter was a maid.

I took hold of her through the fatal grating, against which she placed her pretty body, and shewed her how I assured myself of the fact, and the girl liked it so much that she pressed my hand to the spot. She then gave me her hand that I might share her pleasure, and whilst this enjoyable occupation was in progress M—— M—— appeared. My sweetheart said hastily,——

"Never mind, I told her all about it. She is a good creature and will not be vexed." Accordingly M—— M—— pretended not to see anything, and the precocious little girl wiped her hand in a kind of voluptuous ecstasy, which shewed how well she was pleased.

I proceeded with my history, but when I came to the episode of the poor girl who was *tied*, de-

scribing all the trouble I had vainly taken with her, the little boarder got so curious that she placed herself in the most seducing attitude so that I might be able to shew her what I did. Seeing this M—— M—— made her escape.

“Kneel down on the ledge, and leave the rest to me,” said the little wanton.

The reader will guess what she meant, and I have no doubt that she would have succeeded in her purpose if the fire which consumed me had not distilled itself away just at the happy moment.

The charming novice felt herself sprinkled, but after ascertaining that nothing more could be done she withdrew in some vexation. My fingers, however, consoled her for the disappointment, and I had the pleasure of seeing her look happy once more.

I left these charming creatures in the evening, promising to visit them again in a year, but as I walked home I could not help reflecting how often these asylums, supposed to be devoted to chastity and prayer, contain in themselves the hidden germs of corruption. How many a timorous and trustful mother is persuaded that the child of her affection will escape the dangers of the world by taking refuge in the cloister. But behind these bolts and bars desires grow to a frenzied extreme; they crave in vain to be satisfied.

When I returned to the inn I took leave of the wounded man, whom I was happy to see out of

danger. In vain I urged him to make use of my purse; he told me, with an affectionate embrace, that he had sufficient money, and if not, he had only to write to his father. I promised to stop at Lyons, and to oblige Desarmoises to desist from any steps he might be taking against them, telling them I had a power over him which would compel him to obey. I kept my word. After we had kissed and said good-bye, I took his future bride into my room that we might sup together and enjoy ourselves till midnight; but she could not have been very pleased with my farewell salute, for I was only able to prove my love for her once, as M—— M——'s young friend had nearly exhausted me.

I started at day-break, and the next day I reached the "Hotel du Parc," at Lyons. I sent for Desarmoises, and told him plainly that his daughter's charms had seduced me, that I thought her lover worthy of her, and that I expected him out of friendship for me to consent to the marriage. I went further, and told him that if he did not consent to everything that very instant I could no longer be his friend, and at this he gave in. He executed the requisite document in the presence of two witnesses, and I sent it to Chambéri by an express messenger.

This false marquis made me dine with him in his poor house. There was nothing about his younger daughter to remind me of the elder, and his wife inspired me with pity. Before I left I managed to

wrap up six louis in a piece of paper, and gave it to her without the knowledge of her husband. A grateful look shewed me how welcome the present was.

I was obliged to go to Paris, so I gave Desarmois sufficient money for him to go to Strasburg, and await me there in company with my Spaniard.

I thought myself wise in only taking Costa, but the inspiration came from my evil genius.

I took the Bourbonnais way, and on the third day I arrived at Paris, and lodged at the "Hotel du St. Esprit," in the street of the same name.

Before going to bed I sent Costa with a note to Madame d'Urfé, promising to come and dine with her the next day. Costa was a good-looking young fellow, and as he spoke French badly and was rather a fool I felt sure that Madame d'Urfé would take him for some extraordinary being. She wrote to say that she was impatiently expecting me.

"How did the lady receive you, Costa?"

"She looked into a mirror, sir, and said some words I could make nothing of; then she went round the room three times burning incense; then she came up to me with a majestic air and looked me in the face; and at last she smiled very pleasantly, and told me to wait for a reply in the ante-chamber."

